

SERMONS

UPON SEVERAL
PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

By the Late Reverend

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Maplederham, Oxen; and late Chaplain in
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COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE COMMITTEE

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*The Folly of Hypocrisy in this
World.*

A

S E R M O N

On JOB viii. 13.

--- *The Hypocrite's Hope shall perish.*

SINCERITY cannot be more SERM.
effectually recommended, than XIII.
by considering the Difficulty
of disguising our Inclinations,
and laying a perpetual Constraint upon
our Words and Actions. This is an
Argument, which will set the Folly of
Hypocrisy in the clearest Light, and

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B

can-

SERM. cannot fail to give the Preference to
 XIII. Religion, even upon the Principles of
 worldly Wisdom. Men think them-
 selves obliged, in common Prudence,
 as they would secure their Interest in
 the World, to wear the Garb of Holi-
 ness at least; and if they were further
 persuaded, that it is a Work of less Dif-
 ficulty to subdue their corrupt Affec-
 tions, than to conceal them, this, one
 would think, must thoroughly convince
 them, how fruitless it is to pursue the
Shadow of Virtue, when the *Substance*
 may be had at a much cheaper Rate.

In order to give this Consideration
 its proper Force, you may observe, that
 notwithstanding our Infirmities may be
 deeply rooted in our Hearts, and cleave
 so fast, as not to be removed without
 violent Pangs and Struggles; yet the
 painful Operation is soon over, and
 then all is Peace. Our inordinate Af-
 fections grow daily more feeble and
 languid; every Stain and Blemish wears
 out by degrees; every good Purpose
 exerts

exerts itself in Action, and every good SERM.
Action improves into Habit; till at last XIII.
Virtue becomes easy and familiar, and
soon appears lovely to the Soul. Hypocrisy, on the other hand, engages a Man in endless Perplexity, fills him with perpetual Doubts and Suspicions, and renders his whole Life restless and uncomfortable. As his Designs and Pretences are ever at Variance, one Artifice becomes necessary for the Support of another: Thus every Step he takes leads him into new Mazes and Intricacies, till he loses himself at last in a Labyrinth of his own contriving.

This will appear by considering more distinctly, that Dissimulation, as it is made up of Affectation and Falshood, is apt to break in upon its own Measures, and frustrate its own Schemes and Intentions.

Affectation never fails to overact its Part. It is continually pressing to be observed, and setting itself forth in all the Graces it can exert. Like an ignorant Painter, it delights in superfluous

SERM. Decorations, and loses the Resemblance
 XIII. amidst an infinite Profusion of glaring
 ~~~~~ and ill-chosen Colours: So that Hypo-  
 crisy, notwithstanding its Disguises, discovers itself to the most ordinary Beholder, by affecting to display too many Beauties, and by abounding with supernumerary Ornaments.

Falshood, which is the other Ingredient, as it is on all sides beset with Dangers, and liable to be detected by numberless Events, which it can never sufficiently attend to, must needs be extremely jealous, always dissatisfied with itself, and full of distracting Doubts, and fearful Apprehensions. This, besides that it is a very uncomfortable Frame of Mind, is moreover the most likely Means in the World to discover what there is so much Care taken to conceal. Truth is frank, open, and unreserved, distinguishing itself by a certain ingenuous Freedom, which is the natural Result of Innocence and Simplicity. As it is always undesign-  
 ing,

ing, it is unsuspecting too; and tho' it SERM.  
never seeks the *Applause of Men*, it sel- XIII.  
dom fails of obtaining it. These are ~~~~~  
the sure Marks and inseparable Charac-  
ters of that amiable and engaging Vir-  
tue: In consequence of which it is na-  
tural to conclude, that the Hypocrite  
will be betray'd by his own Diffidence  
and Suspicion; because, tho' it is im-  
possible to deceive the World without  
the utmost Care and Circumspection,  
that very Care and Circumspection it-  
self will unavoidably detect him.

To inforce this Argument, it may  
be further observed, that the Hypocrite,  
as well as the just and upright Man,  
will be sure to draw the Attention of  
the Multitude. The Singularity of  
their Behaviour will expose them to the  
severest Examination; and their Con-  
duct will be canvass'd with very quick  
and piercing, if not with envious and  
malignant Eyes. But here lies the Dif-  
ference in the Event: The good Man  
bears the Test of the strictest Scrutiny;

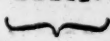


SERM. or, if Envy and Defamation, Vice and  
 XIII. Ignorance, conspire to blast his Character, they can never deprive him of that strong Consolation, which will fortify the Mind against the sharpest Stings of Calumny, *even the Testimony of a good Conscience.* I need not observe, on the other side, how easy it will be to see thro' the Disguises of the Hypocrite, under all the Disadvantages I have already mentioned; nor how deplorable his Condition will then be, when he is stripped of what was the Substance of all his Wishes, *viz.* the good Opinion and Esteem of Mankind.

For it must be observed yet further, to his utter Confusion, that his Character, once lost, is irretrievable. Every new Attempt to regain his Credit, will but confirm the general Persuasion, and render him still more odious and detested.

This, one would think, might be sufficient to discourage any reasonable  
 Man



Man from engaging in such a Scene of SERM.  
Perplexity. But since it is impossible XIII.  
to account for the Chimæras of a Man,   
who fancies himself cunning, since he  
may flatter himself with a wonderful  
Conceit of his own superior Talents,  
and think himself such a Master of De-  
lusion, as not to be alarm'd at the Mis-  
carriages of his less artful Brethren, let  
us reason with him upon that Supposi-  
tion. Let us suppose, that by artificial  
Disguises and false Colours, by Shifts  
and Subterfuges, and all the little Wiles  
which the most pregnant Genius can  
suggest, or the basest stoop to, he may  
struggle thro' these Paths of Error: His  
Mask shall neither drop off by Acci-  
dent, nor be torn from him by the  
Attempts of his Enemies, but he shall  
enjoy all the Satisfaction he can receive  
from seeing his Plots thrive and flou-  
rish, and himself, by their Success, re-  
garded as a wise and good Man. Thus  
much may be safely allowed him, to  
convince him the more effectually of

SERM. his Error, and to shew him, that after  
 XIII. all, he is likely to miscarry; even this  
 way his *Hope shall perish.*

For, if you will inquire into the Springs and Motives of such a Man's Actions, and consider to what End they are directed, it will appear, that the only Acquisition he can aim at, must be that of Fame, or Wealth, or Power. Pleasure can be no Part of his Pursuit, because it is inconsistent with his seeming Sanctity, and that Garb of Holiness he would appear in. Fame, therefore, or Wealth, or Power, must needs be the Object of his Wishes. But how far he is likely to succeed, we shall observe by considering them in their Order.

In the first Place therefore, let us consider him as a Candidate for Fame alone, as a Man passionately fond of Applause, and, as he is represented in the Gospel, *sounding a Trumpet before him* when he does his Alms, affecting to pray publickly in the Synagogues,  
 and

and in the Corners of the Streets, *that* SERM.  
*he may be seen of Men*; in short, prac- XIII.  
tising all the External of Religion, with  
a View to his own Glory, and con-  
tenting himself with that slender Re-  
ward which depends upon the empty  
Voices of the wavering and unsettled  
Multitude.

It cannot be denied, but a fair and  
unblemished Character, when a Man is  
conscious to himself that he deserves it,  
is an inestimable Blessing; and when it  
is desired for the sake of God's Glory,  
a very laudable Pursuit. A shining  
Pattern of Christian Purity, *in the midst*  
*of a corrupt and perverse generation*, may  
be more instrumental to the Conver-  
sion of Sinners, than the most labour'd  
Eloquence. And thus far the Hypo-  
cite indeed, while he continues so  
well masked as we suppose him, may  
have his Share in doing Honour to his  
Maker. For, as long as the World is  
mistaken in him, and deceiv'd by his  
Pretences of Religion, it is to all In-  
tents

SERM. tents and Purposes as effectual with re-  
 XIII. gard to them, as if he had the Life and  
 Spirit of it. But then, with regard to  
 the Man himself, the Question is, What  
 Benefit he receives from the Character?  
 For tho' he happens to be the Instru-  
 ment of *bringing many to Righteousness*,  
 and tho' there is a Blessing promis'd to  
 those who do so; yet is he no way in-  
 titled to that Blessing, because the good  
 Influence of his Example was no Part  
 of his Intention. In order to make  
 the Character beneficial to him, it  
 must have something in it intrinsically  
 valuable; something which, without  
 the Consideration of a Reward, may  
 give him Pleasure in the Possession.

Now the only real Grounds of Plea-  
 sure that a Man can receive from a  
 good Name, are what I intimated be-  
 fore; either the Consciousness of that  
 Virtue by which it was procured, or  
 the Consideration that it is conducive  
 to God's Glory and the Good of Man-  
 kind. A Man who is not in a State  
 of



of Salvation himself, will receive but SERM.  
little Comfort from reflecting, that he XIII.  
causes others to be so, or that he is un-  
designedly promoting the Honour of  
that God, whose Ordinances he abuses,  
whose Name he daily prostitutes to the  
most infamous and unworthy Purposes.  
So that unless he can play the Hypo-  
crite with himself, and flatter himself  
into a Conceit of that Virtue which he  
has not, all the Respect which can be  
paid to him upon the Score of his pre-  
tended Piety, is so far from giving  
Pleasure, that it is a Pain to him; for  
if he thinks at all about it, the first  
and most obvious Reflexion he can  
make upon it is, That he does not de-  
serve it. Now every Degree of unde-  
served Praise is, in Effect, a Reproach,  
inasmuch as it awakens in our Minds  
a Sense of our own Unworthiness, and  
looks like upbraiding us with the Want  
of that Merit which is ascrib'd to us.  
Accordingly, when we suppose the  
Man who offers it, to be acquainted  
with



SERM. with our Infirmities, we are so far  
XIII. from being pleased with the Flattery,  
that we are apt to resent it as an Indignity. If it be asked therefore, in the Case before us, Who can give so much Uneasiness to the Hypocrite, since we suppose his Vices to be concealed from the World, and all his Pretences to pass for Realities? I answer, His own Conscience. Conscience is ever watchful to check the most presumptuous Sinner, to curb his Pride, and abase his Vanity, and reduce him to an humble Sense of his own Foulness and Deformity. As often as he reflects upon his ill-gotten Honours, it will taint and imbitter them with the Conviction of his Guilt; in a Word, it will turn his Glory into Shame, and the finest Panegyrics into Censure and Reproach.

For these Reasons, I suppose, the Hypocrite, tho' he were able to secure so precarious a Thing as Fame, would have but little Cause to be pleased with

it. Let us consider therefore, in the SERM.  
next Place, whether he is likely to suc- XIII.  
ceed any better in his Pursuit of Wealth   
and Power. These two may be fairly  
placed together, under the Name of  
Worldly Interest. *First*, Because they  
are naturally productive of each other:  
For Wealth will purchase Power, and  
Power will command Wealth. *Se-*  
*condly*, Because, in the present Inquiry,  
it will appear from the same Considera-  
tions, that the Hypocrite's Hope, with  
respect to both, is equally weak and  
groundless.

And here I might safely trust the  
Question to the Result of every Man's  
Experience. How are the Riches of the  
World dispos'd of? Are they propor-  
tioned to the seeming Piety of their  
Possessors? Do they accompany the  
most distinguish'd Zeal? Alas! we find  
it otherwise. We see daily, that the  
good Things of this Life are independ-  
ant upon Human Forecast. So true  
is the Wise Man's Observation, that *the*  
*Race*

SERM. *Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle  
XIII. to the Strong, nor yet Bread to the Wise,*

*nor yet Riches to Men of Understanding,  
nor Favour to Men of Skill; but Time  
and Chance happeneth to them all.* It is  
for this Reason, that all temporal Ad-  
vantages are, in the ordinary Form of  
Speaking, called the Goods or Gifts of  
Fortune, because they are observed, for  
the most part, to be derived from such  
secret Sources, such seemingly fortuitous  
Events, as, in Conformity to our own  
slender Conceptions, we usually style  
Casualties or Contingencies. Not that,  
in a strict and proper Sense, we can  
call any thing casual or contingent. Had  
we but a clearer Insight into the Ways  
of Providence, we should, doubtless,  
behold the most perfect Order, the  
most exact and regular Concurrence of  
Second Causes to the Execution of God's  
secret Purposes, and admire the infinite  
Wisdom of the Contriver. And here  
we are come to the true Reason, why  
the Hypocrite's Hope shall perish, be-  
cause

cause amongst all his Stratagems, he SERM.  
leaves out the only sure and effectual XIII.  
Art of Thriving, the Procurement of  
God's Blessing upon his Endeavours.  
Without This, he may very artfully dis-  
semble, and amuse himself with many  
airy Projects; but those Projects are the  
Fruits of Vanity, and they will end in  
*Vexation of Spirit*: For *Promotion*, as  
the Psalmist well observes, *cometh nei-*  
*ther from the East, nor from the West,*  
*nor yet from the South.* We can no more  
govern or direct the Course of it, than  
we can command the Winds to fill our  
Sails, or teach them from which side  
of the Heavens they shall blow. For,  
as it follows, *God is the Judge; he put-*  
*teth down one, and setteth up another.*  
He is the Judge of our Innocence and  
Integrity; he is the Judge of our Ca-  
pacities and Powers; and he is the Judge  
of our Designs and Purposes. He  
knows who best deserves the Blessings of  
this Life, if any Man can be said to  
deserve them: He knows who can, and  
who



SERM. who will employ them to the Advance-  
 XIII. ment of his Glory, and the great Ends  
 of his gracious Providence; and in proportion to the Difference of Men's Circumstances in these Respects, there is no doubt but he observes a suitable Difference in his Dispensations to them, aiding and supporting some Men with singular Demonstrations of *Mercy and Loving-kindness*; but abandoning and forsaking others, who take not him for their Trust, to the fatal Consequences of their own Pride and Obstinacy, and to the bitter Fruits of their mistaken Policy.

Prayer is the only Method, which God has been pleased to appoint, for the Attainment of all temporal, as well as spiritual Mercies. We are taught to pray for our daily Bread, as well as for the *Forgiveness of our Sins*; for the Comforts and Conveniencies of this Life, as well as for a glorious Inheritance in the next. And if we do pray for them with such a Spirit as we ought, there



there is no doubt but we shall effectual-SERM.  
ly obtain them: Obtain them, I mean, XIII.  
in such a manner, and to such a de-  
gree, as he sees will be most useful for  
us. Since therefore the Hypocrite is  
so proud, *that he careth not for God,*  
*neither is God in all his Thoughts;* since  
he relies upon his own Conduct and  
Experience, saying with the insolent *As-*  
*syrian* in the Prophet, *By my own Hand*  
*will I do this Thing, and by my Wisdom,*  
*for I am prudent;* since he neglects to  
look up for Succour to that unexhaust-  
ed Source of Bounty, from which every  
good and every perfect Gift cometh,  
we may conclude, that tho' he will not  
be actually opposed in his Designs;  
tho' he will not be denied the free Ex-  
ercise of his Faculties, and the Enjoy-  
ment of those common Blessings which  
are dispensed unto all Men promiscu-  
ously; yet surely he will fall short of  
those greater and more positive Instances  
of God's Favour, by which he is plea-  
sed to cooperate with the Endeavours

SERM. of his faithful People, and which he  
 XIII. has made Prayer the sole Method of  
 obtaining.

If therefore you will take a View of him in this abandon'd and deserted State, thus destitute of the Divine Assistance, and given up to his own Government and Direction, it will appear *First*, that he has no Likelihood of Success. *Secondly*, That if he fails, the Disappointment will receive a peculiar Aggravation, by the very Frame and Disposition of his Temper. And *Thirdly*, That if he should gain his End, he is not sure but it may be a Burden or Incumbrance, nay, possibly may prove his Ruin.

This, you will find, must needs be his Case, when once he has let go his Confidence in God. *First*, I say, he has no Likelihood of Success; and a very small degree of Reflexion upon the Infirmary of Human Nature, will furnish us with abundant Proofs of it. For tho' God has been pleased, for the  
 Mani-

Manifestation of his own Glory, and SERM.  
for the Excitement of our Gratitude XIII.  
and Obedience, to make us, in some  
Respects, little lower than the Angels,  
to ennoble us with many excellent En-  
dowments, and to place us at the Head  
of this Animal Creation; yet has he  
likewise, for the Trial of our Virtue,  
and in order to convince us of our ab-  
solute Dependence upon his Power,  
left us, in other Respects, very frail,  
and feeble, and indigent, and almost  
helpless Beings. For what is the ut-  
most Extent of Human Wisdom, but  
reasoning upon Probabilities and Con-  
jectures? He, that by the Strength of  
a good natural Judgment, or by the  
Help of Experience and Observation,  
sees farthest into the Designs, and In-  
trigues, and Follies of other Men, and  
out of that Variety of jarring Interests,  
makes choice of the most likely Me-  
thods to secure his own, is usually re-  
garded as the shrewdest Man. But a-

SERM. las! how weak and insecure must those  
 XIII. Counfels prove, which are founded  
 ~ upon such uncertain Principles? Where  
 the Malice and Resentment of one  
 Man, the Treachery of another, the  
 Levity and Caprice of a third, besides  
 a Multitude of accidental Circumstances,  
 which it is impossible for the most dis-  
 cerning Eye to foresee, or the most vi-  
 gilant to attend to, may undermine or  
 disconcert his Project, and render all  
 his Labour fruitless.

This is expressed by a very lively  
 Image, by *Bildad* in the Book of *Job*,  
 where, speaking of the Folly of the  
 Hypocrite's Expectation, *His Hope*, says  
 he, *shall be cut off, and his Trust shall*  
*be a Spider's Web*; intimating, that he  
 may have formed it with great Art and  
 Industry, and contriv'd it like the Nets  
 of that ensnaring Reptile, to glut him-  
 self with the Spoils of others; but, af-  
 ter all, the slightest and most trivial  
 Accident, perhaps before it has had its  
 mis-



mischievous Effect, may break and dis-  
joint the goodly Fabrick, or utterly  
overturn and ruin it. SERM. XIII.

But *Secondly*, If this should happen to be the Case, as it is more than probable it will, you may observe, that the Disappointment will receive a peculiar Aggravation, from the very Frame and Disposition of his Temper. I will explain what I mean by an Instance, and a remarkable Instance we have in the Story of *Achitophel*, which I shall take the Liberty to relate at large. This Man was, it seems, a very dextrous Hypocrite, one, that had not the least Regard to Religion or common Honesty, as appears from his treacherous Desertion of his Royal Master, as well as from that execrable Advice he gave to *Absalom*, relating to his Father's Concubines; yet being perfectly acquainted with *David's* Piety, who had declared upon his first Accession to the Royal Dignity, that he *would set no wicked thing before his Eyes; that a fro-*

SERM. *ward Heart should depart from him; and*

XIII. *that he would not know a wicked Person;*

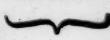
being acquainted, I say, with this solemn Resolution of his Master *David*, he thought it necessary to disguise his Vices, and sacrifice them for some time to his Ambition; and accordingly, did so artfully conform himself to the Inclinations of that pious Prince, as to gain the first Place in his Affections, and to seat himself at the Head of his Counsels. But finding the Peoples Affections bear violently towards the rebellious *Absalom*, and weary perhaps of that religious Restraint which the Court of *David* had confin'd him to, he gladly applies himself to the prevailing Faction, and makes his Court to the young Usurper. And now he had a fair Prospect of all that his Hopes could grasp at; a young and unexperienced Prince to govern; one that would require nothing at his Hands, but an Indulgence in all criminal Delights, which, as he was extremely fond of himself,  
he

he was not likely to find fault with in SERM.  
his Counsellor. So that he was at liberty, as soon as he pleas'd, to cast off the Vizard, which had hitherto been a fore Restraint to him, and to make his Greatness and his Vice consistent. But remark the Fruits of Treachery: In the very Dawn and Infancy of his Hopes, finding the Counsel of another prefer'd before his, thinking himself slighted and contemned by one whom he had hoped to govern, stung with Rage and Shame and Disappointment, he arose, says the sacred Historian, *and gat him home to his House, to his City, and set his Household in order, and hanged himself.* If it be ask'd now, What was the Reason that so great and able a Politician, when possibly he might have crush'd his Rival, or found out some better Method to secure his own Quiet, should have recourse to such a desperate Expedient? The Answer is very obvious, It was his Pride. Pride is an inseparable Ingredient in the Composition of

SERM. every Hypocrite, and a Quality which  
 XIII. renders him of all Men living the most  
 { incapable of bearing a Disappointment.

When a Man comes to set such an unreasonable Value upon his own Judgment and Understanding, as to think himself an Over-match for the rest of Mankind, to fancy he can beguile them at Pleasure, and pry into their closest Counsels without ever being detected himself, it is no Wonder if he grows immoderately vain, and in the Strength of that Vanity, first flatters himself with the Promise of some wonderful Acquisitions, and then begins to fancy he has a Right to them. For it is the Nature of all Pride, especially that which is founded upon a Conceit of some superlative Excellency in the Understanding, to make out false and imaginary Titles to every thing which a Man's Heart can wish for. For what Greatness can be so highly elevated, as to be out of the Reach of such exalted Merit? What Difficulties to be encountered



tered in the Way, which so much Pru-SERM.  
dence may not easily surmount? Thus XIII.  
does the Man reason himself into Wealth   
and Power, without suffering himself  
to think he may fall short of them, till  
Experience convincing him of his Mi-  
stake, he raves, and frets, and repines  
at Providence, venting his Anger upon  
Friends and Foes, Himself, or any thing  
which can be thought to have been in-  
strumental to his Miscarriage, or which  
stands within the Reach of his Displea-  
sure.

Thus irksome and tormenting will a  
Disappointment prove, if he should fail  
of the End he proposed.

But *Thirdly*, Because it is not impos-  
sible that he may succeed, you may ob-  
serve, that the very Possession of the  
End he drives at, may perhaps be no  
better than a Burden or Incumbrance,  
nay, possibly may prove his Ruin. For  
if you will but once more reflect upon  
the Infirmary of our Nature, it will ap-  
pear that we are as often mistaken in  
the

SERM. the End we propose, as in the Means  
XIII. we make use of to obtain it.

~ The Life of Man is, you know, frequently called a State of Pilgrimage, a Passage to a better Place of Rest; and to keep up this Allusion, the several Prospects of imaginary Happiness which we fix in it, have been compar'd to those distant Landscapes with which the faint and weary Traveller, dissatisfied with all Objects near him, is apt to entertain his Fancy, pleasing himself with the Thoughts of arriving at that delightful Scene, which appears with so much Beauty and Regularity to the distant Eye. The Similitude is never the less just and beautiful, for being grown so common as it is. But in the Case before us, it may be carried further. For you may observe, that those Places which form a Prospect so amiable and inviting, are usually the most rude and uncultivated Parts of Nature, such as Rocks, and Hills, and Woods, the Receptacles of Thieves and Murderers,

derers, and so not only the most cheat-SERM.  
less and uncomfortable, but likewise the XIII.  
most dangerous Stages we have to pass. ~~~~~

And is not this exactly parallel to our  
Passage thro' this Vale of Misery?  
Have not the most splendid Advantages  
of this Life as many real Dangers,  
when you approach them, as they have  
Beauties and Allurements at a distance?  
To instance in Wealth and Power, the  
two things we are more immediate-  
ly considering; how is a Man sure  
when he has gained them, that the for-  
mer will not expose him to the Arti-  
fices of crafty Deceivers, or the more  
dangerous Assaults of outrageous Spoi-  
lers? that the latter will not sacrifice  
him to the Envy of meaner, or to the  
Jealousy of greater Men? to the im-  
placable Malice of persecuted Enemies,  
or the sharp Resentment of unreward-  
ed Friends? May not Avarice and  
Ambition, those insatiable and torment-  
ing Passions, which first put him upon  
the Pursuit of Greatness, still harrass  
and

SERM. and disquiet him in the Possession, so  
 XIII. that he may lose all the Satisfaction of  
 ~~~~~ what he has already gain'd, in the rest-  
 less Expectation of some thing future?
 Or lastly, may he not, as is too com-
 mon, grow giddy with the Height he
 is rais'd to, and be tempted by his
 Power to such Acts of Insolence and
 Oppression, as may first expose him to
 the Hatred of Mankind, and end at
 last in his utter Ruin? Whoever con-
 siders these, and such-like Hazards, to
 which the good Things of this Life
 may expose us, will have Reason to
 think, that as God may sometimes, in
 Mercy, oppose us in our Attempts to
 gain them, so may he also in his An-
 ger, suffer Men to be curst with Pro-
 sperity, and to be undone by the Suc-
 cess of their Endeavours.

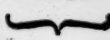
The Truth is, without a Delight in
 God, there can be no real and sub-
 stantial Happiness. Life itself will be
 no better than a Burden, and its most
 honourable Appendages so many Ad-
 ditions

ditions to our Anxiety. This is what SERM.
Job insisted on, when, after having XIII.
 heard the Reasons of his Friends to
 prove the Weakness of the Hypo-
 crite's Expectations, he added this per-
 tinent Interrogatory, as a better and
 more decisive Argument, than any
 which had been urg'd by them: *Will*
he, says he, delight in the Almighty?
Will he always call upon God? Inti-
 mating, that without such a Delight in
 the Almighty, such an Inclination to
 call always upon God, the greatest
 Affluence of earthly Blessings will ne-
 ver procure a Man that inward Com-
 placency, that habitual and lasting
 Peace of Mind, which arises from the
 Consideration of having God for our
 Friend, the great Governor of the
 Universe for our Protector. This is
 of the Essence of all Human Happi-
 ness, insomuch that a Man may as
 well expect the Joys of Heaven here-
 after, as true Quiet and Contentment
 here, upon any other Terms, than the
 sincere

SERM. sincere Practice of Religion, and se-
 XIII. curing to himself an Interest in his
 ~~~~~ God.

Thus have I pursued the Hypocrite thro' those dark and uncertain Mazes which he treads in pursuit of Happiness, and found him always either lost and bewildered in his Searches, or dissatisfied with what he had obtained; either failing of his End, by chusing wrong Methods, or mistaken in the very End itself: So that, upon the whole, we may safely pronounce that, with respect to the Advantages of this present World, the Hypocrite's Hope shall perish.

I chose rather to insist upon this, because it is a Doctrine which the generality of Mankind seem to be but little acquainted with. One great Obstruction to the Practice of Religion is, a false and groundless Opinion, with which the Multitude are apt to deceive themselves, that it is inconsistent with their worldly Interest;  
 that

that Purity and Simplicity of Heart SERM.  
are indeed necessary Qualifications for XIII.  
the obtaining of Happiness in the next   
World; but that Treachery and Diffi-  
cultation, indirect and deceitful Prac-  
tices, have a far better and more ef-  
fectual Tendency to promote their  
Happiness in this. The Use there-  
fore, that I would make of all which  
has been said upon this Subject, is, to  
convince Men of this dangerous Mi-  
stake, that being beaten out of their  
strong Hold of Hypocrisy, they may  
be disposed to hearken with more  
Readiness and Attention to Arguments  
of a more spiritual Nature; and that  
being convinced of the Vanity of all  
earthly Pursuits, they may be induced  
to pursue the one Thing needful, *even*  
*the eternal Salvation of their Souls.*  
For, after all, the great and important  
Question is that which is put by *Job*,  
*What is the Hypocrite's Hope, tho' he*  
*hath gain'd, when God taketh away his*  
*Soul?* or, as a Christian would chuse  
rather

32      *The Folly of Hypocrisy, &c.*

SERM. rather to express it, *when he appears before the Judgment-Seat of Christ?* This, I say, is a Question of the utmost Importance, and which well deserves to be enlarg'd upon. But as it would carry me to too great a Length at present, I shall chuse it as a Subject for another Discourse.

*Now to God the Father, &c.*







*The miserable Portion of Hypocrites in the next World.*

A

S E R M O N

On J O B xxvii. 8. !

*What is the Hope of the Hypocrite, tho' he hath gained, when God taketh away his Soul?*



FOR the better Understanding SERM.  
of these Words, it will be XIV.  
proper to consider, in the  
first Place, the Circumstances  
and Condition of the Person who is  
said to speak them, together with the  
main Scope and Design of his Dis-  
course. *Job* had, as appears from the  
VOL. II. D fore-

# 34      *The miserable Portion of*

SERM. foregoing Chapters, been suspected by  
 XIV. his Friends of Hypocrisy; and good  
 ~ Reason they thought they had to sus-  
 spect him, because, tho' they could lay  
 no one Crime to his Charge (neither  
 indeed did they attempt to do it) yet  
 they saw him visited with such a won-  
 derful and amazing Succession of Cala-  
 mities, as they thought he could never  
 have been afflicted with, but as a Pu-  
 nishment for some secret Sin, some  
 darling Passion, which he had indulg'd  
 in private, to the Ruin of his For-  
 tune, and to the Forfeiture of God's  
 Favour and Protection.

To wipe off this infamous Asper-  
 sion, and to clear up his own Integrity,  
 he first blames them for presuming too  
 positively to pronounce their Opinion  
 upon the Reasons of God's Mercies or  
 Severities to the Sons of Men. *Shall*  
*any (says he) teach God Knowledge, see-*  
*ing he judgeth them that are high? One*  
*dwelt in his full Strength, being wholly*  
*at Ease and Quiet: His Breasts are full*  
*of*

*Hypocrites in the next World.* 35

*of Milk, and his Bones are moistened* SERM.  
*with Marrow. And another dieth in* XIV.  
*the Bitterness of his Soul, and never tast-*  
*eth of Comfort. They shall lie down alike*  
*in the Dust, and the Worms shall cover*  
*them:* Intimating, that tho' there is no  
doubt, but all God's Judgments are  
strictly just and equitable, yet to us  
they are obscure and unaccountable,  
involv'd in so much Darknes and Per-  
plexity, that it is hard to make any In-  
ference from them to the Advantage  
or Disadvantage of other Men. But  
then, lest they should think that by this  
Opinion of his, he made no difference  
between the Righteous and the Wicked,  
or that he looked upon the Condition  
of the one to be as happy as the other,  
he takes care to assure them of the con-  
trary, telling them, that whatever Blef-  
sings the Wicked might sometimes en-  
joy, or however the Righteous might  
be distressed, yet this should never be  
an Argument with him to prove, that  
Virtue or Vice were indifferent Matters,

SERM. foregoing Chapters, been suspected by  
 XIV. his Friends of Hypocrisy; and good  
 Reason they thought they had to suspect him, because, tho' they could lay no one Crime to his Charge (neither indeed did they attempt to do it) yet they saw him visited with such a wonderful and amazing Succession of Calamities, as they thought he could never have been afflicted with, but as a Punishment for some secret Sin, some darling Passion, which he had indulg'd in private, to the Ruin of his Fortune, and to the Forfeiture of God's Favour and Protection.

To wipe off this infamous Aspersions, and to clear up his own Integrity, he first blames them for presuming too positively to pronounce their Opinion upon the Reasons of God's Mercies or Severities to the Sons of Men. *Shall any (says he) teach God Knowledge, seeing he judgeth them that are high? One deth in his full Strength, being wholly at Ease and Quiet: His Breasts are full of*



*Hypocrites in the next World.* 35

of Milk, and his Bones are moistened SERM.  
with Marrow. And another dieth in XIV.  
the Bitterness of his Soul, and never tast-  
eth of Comfort. They shall lie down alike  
in the Dust, and the Worms shall cover  
them: Intimating, that tho' there is no  
doubt, but all God's Judgments are  
strictly just and equitable, yet to us  
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plexity, that it is hard to make any In-  
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then, lest they should think that by this  
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between the Righteous and the Wicked,  
or that he looked upon the Condition  
of the one to be as happy as the other,  
he takes care to assure them of the con-  
trary, telling them, that whatever Bles-  
sings the Wicked might sometimes en-  
joy, or however the Righteous might  
be distressed, yet this should never be  
an Argument with him to prove, that  
Virtue or Vice were indifferent Matters,

SERM. or that the false Pretence and Appearance of Religion was as good as the true Substance and Spirit of it. *As God liveth, says he, who hath taken away my Judgment, and the Almighty, who hath vexed my Soul; all the while the Breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my Nostrils, my Mouth shall not speak Wickedness, nor my Tongue utter Deceit. God forbid that I should justify you; till I die, I will not remove mine Integrity from me. My Righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: My Heart shall not reproach me so long as I live. Let mine Enemy be as the Wicked, and he that riseth up against me, as the Ungodly. For what is the Hope of the Hypocrite, tho' he hath gained, when God taketh away his Soul? As if he had said, I am as sensible, as you can be, of the great Benefits which accompany Sincerity; and therefore I will never part with it, for all the seeming Profits which the Hypocrite can obtain. For whatever becomes of your Argument, whether*  
 he

*Hypocrites in the next World.* 37

he always suffers in this World or no, SERM.  
yet sure I am, there is another World, XIV.  
wherein he will be called to a severe  
Account, wherein all the seeming Irregularities in God's Providence will be set right, and the Wicked will meet with a due Recompence for their Sins.

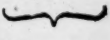
It must be owned, that this Sense of the Words which I have given you, is not without its Objections. For it may be said, *First*, That upon examining this Passage distinctly, it does not appear *Job* had any Regard in his Argument to a State of Retribution in the next World, because the following Part of his Discourse does manifestly relate to the Affairs of this World only. *Secondly*, That if you consider what dark and imperfect Notices of a future State the World must be supposed to have had, at the Time when this Book was written, how it was couched under Types and Shadows, and never fully and clearly apprehended, till our blessed Lord himself brought *Life and*

SERM. *Immortality to light thro' the Gospel*, it  
XIV. may reasonably be supposed, that he had

no View to those future Punishments, which were at that Time so little understood, and that he did not consider Death as a Passage to another Life, but as the last Period and Consummation of this. In Answer to the first of these Objections, it will be sufficient to observe, that in the Poetical Parts of Holy Scripture, where the Sentiments are warm and elevated, there is not always that exact Order and Contrivance, that Caution in the Transition from one Subject to another, which is to be met with in argumentative Discourses. Whoever will carefully consider the Book which I am speaking of, will find this to be the Case in almost every Chapter; so that it can be no Fault in the Passage before us, to have Recourse to the same Rule for explaining it, which must needs be so frequently applied to for the understanding the other Parts of the Book; especially since by this  
Means



*Hypocrites in the next World.* 39

Means the Argument appears with SERM.  
much greater Strength and Consisten- XIV.  
cy, than by understanding it in any   
other manner. For since it is mani-  
festly *Job's* Intention to prove, that he  
looks upon the Condition of the Hy-  
pocrite to be less desirable than that of  
the righteous Man, in some Respect or  
other; and since he declares in other  
Places, that with respect to the Ad-  
vantages of this World, there is little  
or no Difference between them; we  
may reasonably conclude, that when he  
comes to set the Folly of Hypocrisy  
upon a better Foot, he must mean  
something more than that Separation  
of Soul and Body, that breaking of  
the vital Union, which is common both  
to the Just and Unjust, and conse-  
quently that he has respect to those  
subsequent Punishments of wicked Men,  
to which Death is but an Entrance or  
Introduction; unless it can be proved  
that he was an utter Stranger to this  
Doctrine, and had no Knowledge of  
such

SERM. such Recompences hereafter. And this  
XIV. brings me to the second Objection,  
drawn from the Darkneſs and Uncertainty, under which the World did at that time labour, with reſpect to that great and important Article, the Doctrine of a future Judgment. In answer to this it muſt be obſerved, that a Man may give a firm and ſincere Aſſent to the Truth of Doctrines, which he has no clear and explicit Notion of. For inſtance, there are many pious and well-meaning Chriſtians, who believe the Doctrine of the bleſſed Trinity, without ever being able to explain, as others will pretend to do, what is the ſtrict and precise Meaning of the Word *Perſon*, or how *Three* of them can be united together in *One* ſimple and undivided Subſtance. So that the Darkneſs and Obſcurity wherewith the Thing was underſtood, is no Proof that it was not fully credited: And tho' the Myſtery of our Redemption, the Manner of our Reſurrection,

*Hypocrites in the next World.* 41

surrection, the Nature of our Trial at SERM.  
the Judgment-Seat, together with the XIV.  
other Circumstances of that awful So- ~~~~~  
lemnity, were not revealed in the Pro-  
phetick Writings, with so much Accu-  
racy and Exactness as they were after-  
wards by Christ and his Apostles, yet  
that there was to be a Resurrection in  
general, and a State of Rewards and  
Punishments subsequent thereupon, was  
expected with some Confidence and  
Assurance; insomuch that the *Saddu-  
cees*, who disputed the Truth of it,  
were looked upon by their believing  
Brethren, as a wilful and perverse sort  
of People, who were unreasonably fond  
of their own Fancies and Inventions,  
and obstinately shut their Eyes against  
Conviction. Now that this was no  
novel and upstart Notion, introduced a-  
mong the later *Pharisees*, but a primi-  
tive and authentick Doctrine, as early  
as Religion itself, is evident from ma-  
ny positive Predictions to this purpose,  
which are to be found in their most  
ancient

SERM. ancient Writings, which however grossly perverted and misinterpreted by the  
 XIV. Ignorance of the succeeding *Jews*, yet were afterwards so wonderfully cleared up and illustrated by their Correspondence with the Gospel-Promises, that their Meaning can be no longer doubted of. I need not cite a Multitude of Instances, because we have one as good as a Multitude from the Mouth of *Job* himself. *I know, says he, that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the later Day upon the Earth: And though after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for my self, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another.* I would fain hear the most hearty Christian profess his Faith in the Redemption of Mankind, and the Resurrection from the Grave, in Words more determinate and express. *I know that my Redeemer liveth:* A Declaration given with so much Confidence and Assurance, such an apparent Triumph upon



*Hypocrites in the next World.* 43

on his Prospect of future Happiness, SERM.  
that those who would suppose the an- XIV.  
cient Fathers to have wanted these  
Hopes of Immortality, must have re-  
course to a Miracle to explain it. They  
must suppose it could proceed from no  
other Cause, but some great and su-  
pernatural Support, with which the Di-  
vine Goodness was pleased to refresh  
him; some Anticipation or Foretaste of  
his future Happiness, which was given  
him as a Counterpoise to his present  
Agonies, and to the Malice of his im-  
placable Tormenter. However, be this  
as it will, it is evident from this Pas-  
sage, beyond all Contradiction, that  
*Job* was no Stranger to the Doctrine of  
a future Judgment, which was all that I  
intended to prove by it. And can it be  
supposed after all, that He, who has  
expressed himself upon this Subject with  
so much Strength and Perspicuity, who  
has also declared in another Place, *that*  
*the Wicked is reserved to the Day of De-*  
*struction; that they shall be brought forth*  
to

SERM. *to the Day of Wrath*; can it be supposed, I say, that this Man at such a  
 ~~~~~ Juncture, when he was setting forth the Folly of the Hypocrite in its blackest and most aggravating Colours, should have mentioned nothing but his temporal Death, when he knew it was so much more to the purpose to have insisted upon his eternal Misery? For as to the Words themselves, they are more capable of bearing this Sense, than the other: And I cannot but observe, that our blessed Lord himself, who first published these Tidings to the World in their full Latitude and Extent, where he is professedly treating of this Subject, makes use of Expressions to the very same Effect. *What is a Man profited*, says he, *if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* Words, that have so exact a Similitude and Affinity to these of *Job*, that one would think they had been borrowed from them, and that Christ, who was perfect Wisdom, seeing the Strength and Co-  
 gency

Hypocrites in the next World. 45

gency of the Argument in my Text, SERM.
had not only been pleased to make use XIV.
of it himself, but had also confined
himself, as far as the Nature of his
Subject would permit, to the same
Phrase and Form of Speaking.

Upon the whole, I shall take it for
granted, that *Job's* Meaning at large is
this: I am as sensible, my Friends, as
you can be, of the Truth of what one
of you has advanced, that *the Hypo-*
crites's Hope shall perish; but whether it
will always perish in this World, is
more than I will presume to affirm.
However, there is another Considera-
tion, which has a far greater Influence
upon me, namely, That tho' he were
never so successful here, tho' his Condi-
tion were never so flourishing, yet his
Life is short and transient, and there is
a great Day of Accounts at hand,
when not only the Works of his
Hands, but also the very Thoughts of
his Heart; not only his foulest Actions,
but even the Principles and Motives
upon

SERM. upon which he performs the best, shall
 XIV. be all together laid naked and open before the Eyes of an impartial Judge, even that great and awful God, *who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and will be sure to render unto every Man according to his Works.* It is therefore a more material Point with me, a Point which I think it every Man's Duty to consider, what Plea he will be able to make before that wise and Almighty Being, whose Sentence is to fix his Happiness or Misery to all Eternity.

II. This I take to be the Meaning of my Text, which having thus fully opened and explained to you, I proceed in the *Second Place* to examine it more distinctly, by enquiring What Hope the Hypocrite can reasonably have of escaping at that dreadful Day.

For surely it must be a dreadful Day indeed, when a terrified and affrighted Sinner, who has run out the short Span which was allowed him, and has now no Space to wipe out his ~~past~~ Transgressions,

Hypocrites in the next World. 47

gressions, shall be summoned to have SERM.
his Cause examined before a provoked XIV.
and offended God; a God, to whom ~~~~~
he has been obliged for his very Being,
for a rational and immortal Soul, endued
with many noble Faculties; but,
what is infinitely more precious than all
the rest, capable of knowing and adoring
his great Creator; for a Redemption
by his Son's Blood from the Power
of Sin and Satan; and for many other
great and glorious Benefits without
Number, and without Measure, for
which he has made no other Returns
of Gratitude and Obedience, but what
Shame or Fear, or that more base and
ignoble Principle, the Hope of worldly
Interest, has obliged him to: In
short, a God whose Statutes he has de-
rided in his Heart, at the same 'time
that he has approached him with his
Lips, and whose holy Name he has
most impudently made use of, as a Co-
ver for his own dark and flagitious Pur-
poses. To such a one, I say, the Ma-
jesty

SERM. jesty of the Lord appearing to take
 XIV. Vengeance of his Enemies, must needs
 ~~~~~ be a very horrible and affrighting Spectacle. And that we may be able to form a better Judgment of the Reception he will meet with there, let us enquire a little more particularly into the Nature of his Guilt; for in proportion to the Degrees of this, there is no doubt but his Punishment will be aggravated or abated.

Whether the daring and licentious Reprobate, who derides every thing which is *honest and of good Report*, or the dark and crafty Dissembler, who cloaths his Treachery under the Garb of Holiness, be the more criminal in the Sight of God, is a Question that may well be spared, they being both so odious and detestable, that neither of them needs any Comparison to aggravate and enhance his Guilt. The Blasphemy and Impiety of the former cannot be so much as heard of without Horror; but then it must be own'd, when

when you compare him with the other, SERM.  
that he acts the fairer and more inge- XIV.  
nuous Part. The Influence of his Ex-  
ample is certainly very dangerous to  
the Community, inasmuch as he dis-  
countenances every thing that is praise-  
worthy, and as far as his Credit and  
Authority reaches, inverts the very Na-  
ture of Good and Evil, making the  
most sacred Things contemptible, and  
the basest reputable. And yet when  
the Hypocrite comes once to be detect-  
ed, it may be question'd which is the  
more dangerous of the two. For a  
Man that has once pretended to great  
Sanctity and Devotion, to be stript of  
those borrowed Ornaments, and to ap-  
pear in his own genuine Deformity,  
gives no small Suspicion to the Igno-  
rant, that all others who profess the  
same, are guilty of as much Artifice  
and Delusion; and as there are some,  
who thro' Weakness will believe this;  
so there are others, who out of a ma-  
licious Principle will industriously fo-

SERM. ment such Suspicions; so that the Mis-  
XIV. carriage of one false Pretender may be  
more mischievous to the Cause of Vir-  
tue, than the constant and uniform  
Obedience of its most sincere Profes-  
sors, can possibly prove useful and be-  
neficial. And indeed it has been ob-  
served in Fact, that Libertinism and  
Hypocrisy do naturally succeed each o-  
ther; and that as, after an Age of  
Lewdness and Debauchery, when Men  
have broke loose from the Restraints of  
Conscience, so as to lose the very Form  
of Godliness, their Successors being a-  
shamed of such flagrant Abuses, have  
had Recourse to a specious Formality,  
to a plausible Pretence of uncommon  
Sanctity; so on the other hand, when  
this has once had its Run, and the  
World began to see thro' the Cheat, it  
has usually degenerated into the con-  
trary Extreme, and rather than make  
use of such infamous Disguises, relapsed  
into downright Scepticism.

Thus



*Hypocrites in the next World.* 51

Thus heinous and provoking does SERM.  
this Vice appear, considered in its Ef- XIV.  
fects and Consequences. But to the  
end that you may behold it in its pro-  
per Colours, let us consider it as it  
appears in itself. And here you may  
observe in the first Place, that it can-  
not but be highly displeasing to Al-  
mighty God, upon account of the cor-  
rupt Principle that it springs from.  
*They love,* says our blessed Saviour,  
speaking of the Hypocrites in his own  
Times, *they love to pray standing in the  
Synagogues, and in the Corners of the  
Streets, that they may be seen of Men:*  
*They disfigure their Faces, that they may  
appear unto Men to fast.* And in ano-  
ther Place, *Therefore when thou dost thine  
Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee,  
as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues  
and Corners of the Streets, that they may  
have Glory of Men: Verily, I say unto  
thee, they have their Reward.* The Re-  
ward, you see, which the Hypocrite  
aims at, according to our blessed Lord's

SERM. Account of it, is Glory; and the Mo-  
XIV. tive which inclines him to seek that

~ Reward, can be nothing else but Pride; a Quality so opposite to the very End of our Existence, and the Foundation of all Religion, that before we can hope for God's Favour, it must be utterly stifled and extinguished. For how is it possible to *sanctify the Lord God in our Hearts*, when we have set up our selves as so many Idols there; or to have any Regard to his Glory, when we are immoderately fond of our own? It would be endless to cite Passages from Scripture, wherein the Heinousness of this Vice is mentioned. But I cannot but observe, that where *Solomon*, from the whole Compass of Iniquity, picks out seven capital Transgressions, which are in a peculiar manner offensive to the Almighty, the two first are Pride and Treachery, both of them sure Marks of the Hypocrite; the latter denoting his deceitful Practice, as the former points out the vicious Mo-  
tive

*Hypocrites in the next World.* 53

tive from which that Practice springs. SERM.  
*These six things doth the Lord hate, saith XIV.*  
*he, nay, seven are an Abomination to* ~~~~~  
*him: A proud Look, and a lying Tongue,*  
and so on. The same Observation is in  
another Place enforced, in a more emi-  
nent and peculiar manner, from the  
Dignity and Authority of the Speaker.  
*Pride and Arrogance, and the evil Way,*  
*and the froward Tongue do I hate.* The  
Person who is introduced as speaking  
these Words, is Wisdom; by which is  
generally understood, either *First*, that  
Attribute or Perfection of the Divine  
Nature which is so called, and is here  
figuratively represented as a Person; or  
*Secondly*, which is the better Sense of  
it, it is understood of the Son of God  
himself, the second Person in the ever-  
blessed Trinity, who is frequently styled  
the Word, or Wisdom, and *Luke xi.*  
*49.* is expressly called *the Wisdom of God.*  
And well may we suppose this Caution  
against Pride to come from that blessed  
Person, who, when he *was made Flesh*

SERM. *and dwelt amongst us*, and might have  
XIV. recommended himself to our Imitation

as a Pattern of all good Works, yet chose to propose himself to the World as an Example of Meekness only. *Learn of me*, says he, *for I am meek and lowly*; intimating, that as Humility is one of the most useful Lessons a Christian has to learn; so Pride, which is the Vice opposed to it, is one of the most dangerous Rocks he has to shun. And such it is elsewhere described to be. *For a Man's Pride shall bring him low*, says Solomon: And in another Place, *Pride goeth before Destruction, and a haughty Spirit before a Fall*. Of this we had a very memorable Instance in the Fall of our Mother Eve. *Ye shall be as Gods*, said the wicked Tempter, who well knew the Passions he was to work upon, and you may be sure made his Assault in the weakest and most defenceless Part; *Ye shall be as Gods*, said that sly Deceiver, *knowing Good and Evil*. This, he knew, was a most engaging Motive:



*Hypocrites in the next World.* 55

Motive: *To be as God* was his own Ambition; he had aimed at it; and perished in the Attempt, so that he was informed by a fatal Experiment, not only how alluring a Temptation it was, but likewise how vile a Sin. And you may be sure it was matter of no small Joy to that malicious and accursed Spirit, no small Endearment of his Stratagem to him, that the very Motive which he had contrived to beguile them, was no less displeasing to the Almighty, than it was pleasing to them; and consequently would be not only the Cause, but the Aggravation of their Guilt and Misery.

Thus fell deluded Man! and had we not received some fatal Taint, some lasting and inherent Weakness from the decay'd Faculties of our first Parents, one would think we should have grown wiser by their Example. But alas! Man is still proud and frail; *to be as God* is his Ambition still; and because, like his fallen Parents in Paradise,

SERM. diſe, he ſees that he is naked; naked  
 XIV. of every thing that is good and honourable, and polluted beſides with many groſs Impurities, he therefore has Recourſe to ſuch thin Diſguiſes as the Poverty of his Invention can ſuggeſt: Over theſe he throws the Garb of Holineſs; then ſounds the Trumpet to proclaim his Worth, and calls the World to fall down and worſhip him.

And much Worſhip he may receive of Man: But, with what Eyes can we ſuppoſe the Almighty to look down upon ſuch an Image of Guilt and Vani-ty! Surely, were we not acquainted with his Patience and Long-Suffering, we ſhould expect ſome dreadful Judgment, ſome great and ſignal Vengeance to overtake him, from the Hand of that righteous Being who hath declared by the Mouth of *Job*, that *the Helpers of Pride ſhall ſtoop under him*; and by the Mouth of his Servant *David*, that *he plenteouſly rewardeth the proud Doer*. Eſpecially, if we conſider in the next Place,

*Hypocrites in the next World.* 57

Place, that all this Guilt is further ag-SERM.  
gravated by being accompanied with XIV.  
Treachery or Insincerity, which is the  
*second* Quality to be observed in the  
Hypocrite, and which is expressed by  
*Solomon* in the Passages above-cited, un-  
der the Title of *lying Lips, or a deceit-*  
*ful Tongue.* This is indeed his most  
essential Property, the Character by  
which he is most eminently distinguish-  
ed, and which exposes him to so much  
Scorn in the World. For it is observa-  
ble of this hateful Quality, from the  
Reception which it meets with among  
Men, that all the Malice and Art of  
Satan, whose Business it is to propagate  
and support it, has never been able to  
gain it any tolerable Credit and Repute.  
To be a Liar, is the Reproach of our  
Nature; and to be upbraided with it,  
the most provoking Affront; insomuch  
that those Monsters of Impiety who  
have gloried in other Vices, have al-  
ways been extremely careful not to ex-  
pose this Failing to the World. It is  
practised

SERM. practis'd indeed, God knows, too much;  
 XIV. but it is practis'd with Shame and Se-  
 crecy: Conscious of its own Foulness  
 and Deformity, it shelters itself in Shades  
 and Coverts, and loveth Darkness ra-  
 ther than Light, because it knows *that*  
*its Deeds are evil.*

If therefore Treachery be thus odious  
 among Men, it cannot but be infinite-  
 ly more so to the supreme Being, up-  
 on the Account of his own Justice and  
 Veracity. It was the Saying of a wise  
 Heathen, remarkable for his just and  
 sublime Ideas of the Divine Nature,  
*That Truth is God's Essence:* By which  
 he seems to have meant, That Truth is  
 so bright a Jewel, as, even in that Blaze  
 of Glory which encompasseth the Throne  
 of God, to have shone with a most  
 distinguish'd Lustre; insomuch that the  
 rest of those eminent Perfections which  
 jointly contribute to make up God's  
 Essence, are in a manner lost and swal-  
 lowed up in that single Attribute. This,  
 I say, was a wise Heathen's Notion;  
 but



*Hypocrites in the next World.* 59

but we Christians must not go so far: SERM.  
We must not so magnify and extol one XIV.  
Attribute of the Godhead, as to form  
mean and unworthy Notions of the  
rest. It is sufficient therefore in this  
Case to observe, that tho' Truth is not  
God's Essence, yet at least it is an es-  
sential Attribute, a Property so insepa-  
rable from the Divine Nature, that you  
may as well conceive there is no God  
at all, as conceive him destitute of this  
heavenly Perfection. Since therefore  
all moral Evil is more or less the Ob-  
ject of God's Wrath, as it is more or  
less repugnant to those Patterns of all  
Goodness upon Earth, which are essen-  
tially inherent in the Divine Nature;  
we may conclude, that He who is *the*  
*God of Truth*, cannot but have an ut-  
ter Aversion to Dissimulation and Fals-  
hood, and consequently, that to act a  
double Part between God and the  
World, to pretend a Zeal for his Glo-  
ry, at the same time that we are viola-  
ting his Laws, is an Insult which will  
be

60      *The miserable Portion of*

SERM. be severely punished; especially since it  
 XIV. is declared in Scripture, that *the Lord*  
 requireth Truth in the inward Parts; that  
 he will destroy them that speak leasing;  
 and that he will abhor the deceitful Man.

But *Thirdly*, as Hypocrisy is thus odious to Almighty God, by being utterly opposite and repugnant to his Veracity; so is it no less displeasing to him, as it is a direct and palpable Affront to that awful and stupendous Attribute, his Omnipresence. For tho' no Man who believes there is any God at all, and has spent one Thought in the Contemplation of his Nature, can be ignorant that he is the great Governor and Superintendant of the Universe, that he attends to our Actions at all Times and Places, that *he is about our Paths, and about our Beds, and spieth out all our Ways*; in a Word, that *he setteth our Misdeeds before him, and our secret Sins in the Light of his Countenance*; tho' no Man, who thinks at all, can help believing the Truth of this, yet  
 he

*Hypocrites in the next World.* 61

he may behave himself, with Respect to SERM.  
God, in as careless and irreverent a man- XIV.  
ner, as if he believed it not, as if he  
thought, that when he is retir'd from  
the Observation of the World, he has  
no Witness or Spectator of his Actions,  
but that he is at Liberty in the Presence  
of God alone, to give a Loose to his  
most criminal Desires, and to practise  
those Things in Defiance and Contempt  
of his Creator, which he would not  
dare to make known to his Fellow-  
Creatures. I say, in Defiance and  
Contempt of his Creator; because,  
tho' it is possible, that at the very  
Time of Commission he may have no  
formal and deliberate Design of doing  
Despight to the Majesty of God, nay,  
possibly may not so much as reflect  
that he is under his immediate Inspec-  
tion, yet before he can have brought  
himself to such a State of Indifference,  
he must have been guilty of many  
wilful Sins, he must have used himself  
to think of God's Presence with less  
Reve-

SERM. Reverence and Devotion than he ought;  
 XIV. in a Word, he must have taken some  
 ~ Pains to get rid of that Sense of Shame,  
 to shake off that religious Horror,  
 which the Thoughts of God's Majesty  
 must naturally excite in young and un-  
 practis'd Sinners. So that in this Case,  
 Inattention and Forgetfulness being the  
 Effect of a more deliberate Contempt,  
 a Habit of Insensibility contracted by  
 repeated Acts of Disobedience, is so  
 far from extenuating his Guilt in the  
 Sight of God, that it does greatly ag-  
 gravate and inflame it. It is for this  
 Reason that the great *Jewish* Lawgiver,  
 when he delivers his last Instructions to  
 his Followers, containing Rules and  
 Directions for their Practice, when he  
 was no longer *to go in and out before*  
*them*, does frequently inculcate this  
 short but useful Caution, *Beware, lest*  
*thou forget the Lord*; and it is observa-  
 ble, that as the whole Compass and Ex-  
 tent of our Duty is sometimes expres-  
 sed in Scripture by the Phrase of *re-*  
*membering*



*Hypocrites in the next World.* 63

membring God, so it is mentioned as an SERM.  
Instance of consummate Wickedness to XIV.  
*forget him. The Wicked shall be turned* ~~~~~  
*into Hell, says David, and all the People*  
*that forget God. To be wicked, and*  
*to forget God, are in his Account sy-*  
*nonymous Expressions, and the same*  
*Punishment is denounced to both. So*  
*that upon the whole, we may cry out*  
*to these presumptuous Offenders, as he*  
*does in another Place: Consider this, ye*  
*that forget God, lest he pluck you away,*  
*and there be none to deliver you.*

After all, it must be fairly acknow-  
ledged, that *to set God always before us,*  
according to the strict and proper Sense  
of the Word, is more than is expected  
from any of us; not because it exceeds  
the Bounds of our Duty, but because  
in this mortal State it is impossible: I  
doubt not but those blessed Spirits who  
have the Enjoyment of God's Presence  
in Heaven, *are evermore praising him,*  
and adoring him in the most exalted  
Raptures of Gratitude and Thank-  
giving:

64      *The miserable Portion of*

SERM. giving: And to have Faculties propor-  
 XIV. tionate to such a vigorous and unwea-  
 ~~~~~ ried Devotion, will be our Happiness as  
 well as Glory hereafter. In the mean
 time, there are Sins of Inadvertency,
 from which good Men are not always
 exempt. And doubtless great Allow-
 ance will be made, great Indulgence
 we are promised in the Gospel, to these
 Frailties and Infirmities of our Nature.
 The Thoughts of God's immediate Pre-
 sence, cannot be always kept alive in
 our Hearts; and if we do but labour
 to keep up an habitual Sense of it, so
 as not willingly and designedly to of-
 fend him, *he will not be extreme to mark
 what is done amiss*, but for the sake of
 his Son's infinite Satisfaction, will ac-
 cept of our sincere Endeavours.

'Tis true, he will so: But what will
 this avail the Hypocrite, who is so far
 from aiming even at this partial Obe-
 dience, that as often as the Sense of
 God's Majesty breaks in upon his Con-
 science, he makes it his Business to stifle

and

Hypocrites in the next World. 65

and suppress it, or (which is worse) to SERM.
represent him to his Imagination as a XIV.
tame and easy Being, of no other Con-
sequence and Concernment to him, but
as he makes use of his Name in the
Execution of his secular Designs, and
for the Advancement of his own Credit
in the World: For it is the Opinion
and Admiration of Men, about
which he is principally concerned. And
this I lay down as a *Fourth* Consideration,
from which his Guilt receives no
small Addition, namely, that *he loves
the Praise of Men more than the Praise
of God*; the Contempt which is shewn
to his Maker being in this Case not a
little aggravated, by that comparative
Esteem and Veneration which he expresses
for the Opinions of his Brethren.

It is true, the Reason why such kind
of Behaviour is usually so sharply re-
sented among Men, is Jealousy, a Passion
with which we cannot suppose the
Most High to be affected, *Hear, O*

66 *The miserable Portion of*

SERM. *House of Israel*, says He, in a most solemn and awful manner, *my Thoughts are*
 XIV. *not as your Thoughts, nor my Ways as your Ways.* And yet he has been pleased in another Place to declare, that He *will not give his Honour to another*; nay, to put the Matter out of all Dispute, He has affirmed in so many Words, that he *is a jealous God*: By which, thus much at least must be meant, that tho' he is not subject to Jealousy, nor any other Passion, yet in this and such like Cases, he will deal with Mankind in the same manner, as Jealousy, were he capable of such a Passion, would suggest: It being the known Rule and Method of God's Proceeding with his Creatures, to confine himself to those Notions and Apprehensions of things, which they themselves are capable of entertaining. *Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous, or is it Gain to him, that thou makest thy way perfect?* And yet, because Praise and Thanksgiving is a Tribute which our Reason

Hypocrites in the next World. 07

Reason tells us is due from a Creature SERM.
to his Creator, he therefore accepts of XIV.
this our bounden Duty, and with such Sa-
crifices he is well pleased. And why
may he not also be displeased with our
Actions, for no other Reason but the
Notions and Designs of the Performer?
That he was so in the Case of Idolatry,
is evident from the History of the *Ca-*
naanites. *We know,* says St. Paul, *that*
an Idol is nothing; nothing, you may be
sure, in God's Account of it, any fur-
ther than as it becomes his Rival and
Competitor, by receiving the Homage
and Adoration of his People, and be-
ing the Object of their misplaced De-
votion. Whether therefore those strange
Gods, wherewith the *Canaanites* provo-
ked him to Displeasure, were inanimate
Stocks and Stones, or malignant and
apostate Spirits, the Outcasts of Hea-
ven, and declared Enemies of his Ma-
jesty, it is certain, that as they were
his Creatures, the Most High could not
repine at their Honour, nor be jealous

SERM. of their Power. It was the Motive
 XIV. and Design of the Idolater, the Prin-
 ciple upon which he acted, which gave
 so much Offence to the Almighty, and
 which caused whole Nations and Peo-
 ple, by his special Determination and
 Appointment, to be dispossessed of
 their Fields and Vineyards, and to be
 destroyed with Fire and Sword.

What then is Man, that we should
 make a God of him? that we should
 prefer his Censures or his Applause, be-
 fore the *Favour of the most high and
 holy one that inhabiteth Eternity*? Let
 him be distinguished by the most shin-
 ing Titles and Appellations with which
 Human Vanity can be exalted; let him
 be Master of the most consummate
 Wisdom, or invested with the most
 ample Power; yet why should you be
 so earnestly solicitous about his Favour
 and Esteem? Will he judge you at
 God's Tribunal? Alas! there you will
 see him, either born on high by Angels,
 into the Regions of the Blessed, and
 pitying

Hypocrites in the next World. 69

pitying your Shame and Misery; or SERM.
else as a disconsolate Sinner like your XIV.
self, waiting to receive his Doom, per-
haps *calling upon the Mountains and Hills*
to cover him, and cursing all those whose
vain Praises upon Earth have brought
him to this State of Misery, where he
will be plunged, together with his im-
pious Flatterers, into everlasting Flames
and Torments, *where the Worm dieth not,*
and the Fire is not quenched.

I shall but just mention one further
Consideration, by which it will appear in
the *Fifth* and *last* Place, how dangerous
and deplorable the Hypocrite's Condition
will be then found, over and above the
Lot of other Sinners; and that is, that
he does in a most eminent and remark-
able Manner despise those Means of
Grace, and neglect those precious Op-
portunities which God is pleased to grant
him for his Conversion. For in this
Sense is the Saying of our Saviour ve-
rified, that *to whomsoever much is given,*
of him shall be much required. Now the

SERM. Hypocrite, in order to support that
 XIV. Form of Godliness which he is constantly
 ~~~~~ to carry about him in the World, and  
 which takes up no small Part of his  
 Thoughts, has more frequent Occa-  
 sions of reflecting upon his Duty, than  
 other Sinners can be supposed to have.  
 For the same Reason he has likewise an  
 Opportunity of hearing more useful  
 Exhortations, and is obliged to be more  
 constant at all publick Devotions, than  
 other Sinners can be persuaded to be.  
 When therefore a Man dares *to rush in-*  
*to the Presence of the Lord*, with a Heart  
 full of impure Desires, and perhaps at  
 that very Instant intent upon Mischief,  
 like the dissembling Scribes and Phari-  
 sees, whom our Lord taxes in the Gos-  
 pel with *making long Prayers, that they*  
*might devour Widows Houses*, surely he  
 must have arrived at a great and tran-  
 scendent Height of Impiety, that he  
 can so contumeliously despise his Ma-  
 ker, while he is under the immediate  
 Sense of his Duty; while others are  
 with

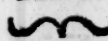


*Hypocrites in the next World.* 71

with joint Hearts and Affections pour-SERM.  
ing out their Souls before him, and a- XIV.  
doring him with a *welcome Tribute of*  
*Praise and Thanksgiving.* For the very  
Places of religious Worship which he  
frequents, the common Offices and  
Forms of Prayer, which are made use  
of there, so well calculated for the  
Relief of our Necessities, and com-  
posed with such a true Spirit of Chri-  
stian Piety, together with the decent  
and orderly Behaviour of his Fellow-  
Christians, met together to serve God  
in Unity of Heart, cannot but awaken  
him to a Sense of his Duty, and put  
him in mind of his Obligations to per-  
form it. And if, notwithstanding this,  
he can be cold and insensible in the midst  
of so much Fervour and Devotion; if  
he can content himself with the Wor-  
ship of his Lips, the mere Outside and  
Formality of Religion, there is this pe-  
culiar Aggravation of his Guilt, that it  
is done under the calmest and coolest  
Reflexion: It is a deliberate Contempt

SERM. of God's Worship : He has no sudden

XIV. Start of Humour, no Gust of impetu-

ous Passion to plead on his Behalf: His Transgression can be ascribed to no other Cause, but a rooted and inveterate Aversion to all Goodness, to a Conscience seared with a hot Iron, and deaf to the most engaging Motives to Obedience. So that it is no Wonder that the holy Prophets under the Law denounced God's Judgments, with so much Zeal and Severity, against a Sin of so deep a Dye ; or that our blessed Lord himself, who was certainly the very Spirit of Meekness, does always raise his Voice with an uncommon Warmth and Vehemence, when he has Occasion to take Notice of it in his Discourses. *Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites:* This is the Crime with which he is ever charging them, and which seems to have given him the greatest Offence, as being, of all Vices, the most opposite to that Simplicity of Heart which it was the Business of his Gospel to inculcate.

From

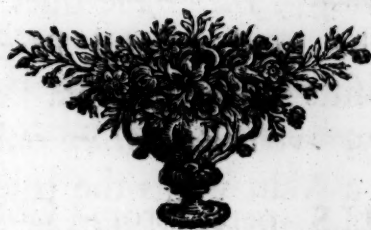
*Hypocrites in the next World.* 73

From hence also you may account for SERM.  
the Reason of our Saviour's Declaration XIV.  
in another Place, where he is denouncing  
God's Wrath against Apostate Christians,  
that he *will cut them asunder, and ap-  
point them their Portion with the Hypo-  
crites.* What Portion that is like to be,  
I have mentioned in another Place al-  
ready.

I shall conclude therefore with this  
single Caution, That as bad as Hypo-  
crisy appears, that Man will make but  
an ill Exchange, who flies out into a  
more open Rebellion: It is a far better  
and more rational Way, to be really  
what he now pretends to be. For that  
is a very easy Task. He does already  
go thro' the most painful Part of it,  
which consists in the external Perform-  
ance: Nay, even *that is then* only pain-  
ful, when a Man wants the true Spirit  
of Devotion: When this comes once  
in to his Aid, Religion is all Peace and  
Joy: Instead of the vain and precarious  
Applause of Men, he will have the  
Applause

SERM. Applause of God and his holy Angels.  
 XIV. In a Word, the most rational Delights  
 will be his Portion here, and eternal  
 Happiness hereafter.

*Which God of his infinite Mercy grant  
 us all, thro' the Merits of our Lord  
 and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now to  
 God the Father, God the Son, and  
 God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as  
 is most due, all Honour, Power, Praise,  
 Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both  
 now, and henceforth, and for ever-  
 more.*







*All common Forms of Swearing  
forbidden.*

A

S E R M O N

On MATTH. V. 34, 35, 36.

*But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by Heaven, for it is God's Throne; nor by the Earth, for it is his Footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy Head, for thou canst not make one Hair thereof white or black.*

**T**HIS peremptory Command SERM.  
of our blessed Lord, and another XV.  
which is copied from it  
by St. James, is all that the  
New Testament has taught us, by way  
of

SERM. of Precept, concerning the Nature and

XV. Use of Oaths; which being a kind of  
 Evidence or Testimony to our Veracity, which in many Cases may be legally required of us, and which some of us are too apt to give, whether legally required or not, it shall be my Business in the following Discourse, *First*, To shew the Meaning of the Precept itself; and *Secondly*, To consider the Doctrine contained in it; that between both, we may know what is here forbidden, and be furnished also with such Thoughts and Reflexions, as are most likely to discourage us from the Practice of it.

I. I am to shew the Meaning of the Precept itself, which though it is expressed in very general Terms, yet that all Oaths are not absolutely forbidden by it, will appear from these following Considerations.

*First*, That the End and Design of Oaths is, to determine Controversies and Disputes. *An Oath for Confirmation*, says the Epistle to the Hebrews, is an End  
 of

*of all Strife* : i. e. it is the best Security we can give to each other for the XV. Truth and Sincerity of our Intentions; and consequently the best Method to compose those Differences, which the general Corruption and Iniquity of Men's Manners do naturally and almost necessarily produce. Indeed, if Christianity had introduced in Fact, such a total Reformation of Men's Principles and Affections, as in Theory one would think it might, there had been no need of this, or any other Obligation, to bind us more effectually to the Practice of our Duty, in all our Dealings and Transactions with each other. But since the infinite Purity and Perfection of the Gospel-Precepts is far from having had such an Influence as this; and since all the Ties of Duty that ever were or can be invented, are little enough to preserve Peace and Order, and to establish that mutual Confidence in each other, without which no Society can subsist, it is not reasonable  
to

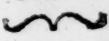
SERM. to think our Saviour would forbid the  
 XV. Use of any Method conducing to so  
 { good an End, unless it can be proved  
 to be in its own Nature sinful, and  
 consequently inconsistent with the Spirit  
 of that Religion which he came into  
 the World to introduce. But that this  
 was not so in the Case before us, will  
 be evident by considering in the next  
 Place,

*Secondly*, That so far as any Act of  
 ours can be said to promote the Ho-  
 nour of God, an Oath does most emi-  
 nently promote it; and that, because it  
 is an Acknowledgment of his infinite  
 Power, and our own Subjection and  
 Dependence thereupon. Agreeable to this  
 are those Words of the Apostle in the sixth  
 Chapter of his Epistle to the *Hebrews*:  
*For Men verily swear by the greater,*  
*i. e.* the very Act of Swearing does it-  
 self imply, that the Person by whom  
 we swear, is our Superior; in like man-  
 ner as to be appealed to for the Deci-  
 sion of any doubtful Matter, is looked  
 on



upon, amongst Men, as a Token of SERM.  
Superiority; and to appeal, as an In- XV.  
stance of Respect. Whenever therefore  
we swear by the Name of God, we do  
thereby testify that we are his Subjects  
and Dependants, under the Inspection  
of his Wisdom, under the Discipline of  
his Justice, and within the Reach of  
his avenging Power. Now, to act  
like Creatures that have a just Sense of  
his Attributes and Perfections, is all the  
Honour we are capable of doing him;  
and therefore he cannot be displeased  
with such an Act as this, which con-  
fesses his Wisdom to be infinite, his  
Justice to be as eminent as his Wisdom,  
and his Power as extensive as both. So  
that tho' an Oath may, and it is to be  
feared is often taken in such a careless  
and disrespectful manner, as is a Proof  
rather of our Contempt of God, than  
any reverent and devout Regard to him;  
yet whenever we swear seriously and  
considerately, with a strict Regard to  
Truth,

SERM. Truth, and a just Sense of the solemn  
XV. Act we are performing, we do naturally lift up our Thoughts to that awful Being, to whom we are making our deliberate Appeal, with such Sentiments and Affections of Mind as, if they were but cloathed in the Garb of Words, would be acknowledg'd to be an Act of Piety; and therefore to God, who regards the Heart, we may be sure they are as acceptable Tokens of our Respect, as if they were expressed in the most affectionate Language, that the Power of Words can give. The casual and accidental Abuses therefore, by which this Action may be possibly profaned, arising not from the Nature of the Thing, but from the Heedlessness or Perverseness of those who use it, is no more a Reason for its being utterly abolish'd, than the irreverent Behaviour, which is sometimes seen in Places of Divine Worship, is a Reason why we should *forsake the Assembling ourselves together*

*together* in them, and give them up as SERM.  
the Seat of Wantonness and Profane- XV.  
ness. 

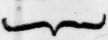
But *Thirdly*, Another Argument to prove that all Oaths are not absolutely forbidden, is, that whether they are expedient in themselves or not, they are certainly required by Human Laws; and were so when this Precept was deliver'd: So that if our Saviour had forbid the Use of them, he must have either put his Disciples upon contesting with their lawful Governors, about a Thing which they had a Right to require, or else he must have prevailed with all Governments in the World, to release his Disciples from their Duty in this Respect; a thing, which though the Lenity of our own Government in particular, lest it should wound any tender Conscience, has been pleased to indulge to a wilful Set of People, who would not be content without it; yet that it is far from being the Case of all

SERM. Governments in general, I need not go  
XV. about to prove.

But *Fourthly*, If we had no other Argument to prove that all Oaths are not absolutely forbidden, the Examples of our Saviour and his Apostle *St. Paul*, afford us a most indisputable Proof of it; the latter of which has frequently in his Epistles, upon great and urgent Occasions, such solemn and religious Asseverations, as contain every thing essential to an Oath; and the former did actually, in a judicial Manner, at the Command of the proper Magistrate, consent to take an Oath himself. For so we are to understand those Words of *St. Matthew*, that the High-Priest said to Jesus upon his Trial, *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.* Upon which Jesus said unto him, *Thou hast said.* Now this Reply to the Adjuration of the Priest was, according to the Practice of the *Jews* in those Matters,



ters, as truly and properly an Oath, as SERM.  
 if, according to the Method in use a- XV.  
 mong us, he had actually laid his right  
 Hand upon the Law, and kissed it most  
 religiously with his Lips. For so says  
 the Rule expressly, *Lev. vi. 1. If a Soul*  
*sin, and hear the Voice of Swearing, and*  
*is a Witness whether he hath seen or*  
*known of it, if he do not utter it, then*  
*he shall bear his Iniquity;* i. e. if any  
 Man be cited before a Magistrate as an  
 Offender, and has the Form of Adju-  
 ration pronounced to him, requiring  
 his Testimony even against himself, if  
 he does not, by Virtue of his Oath,  
 declare all that he knows of that Mat-  
 ter, he shall be guilty. In pursuance  
 therefore of this Law, when the High  
 Priest had pronounced the Words of  
 Adjuration, our Saviour was then ac-  
 tually upon his Oath, and his imme-  
 diate Reply to the Point in Question,  
 was, on his Part, a Confession that he  
 was so; which Confession was the  
 more remarkable, because till he had

SERM. heard *the Voice of Swearing*, he preserved a most invincible Silence: So that  
 XV.  his answering as he did, is a most convincing Argument, not only that an Oath is in some Cases lawful, but moreover, that when it is required by the proper Magistrate, it is in that Case unlawful to refuse it.

Thus much for the first Point to be settled upon this Subject, *viz.* that whatever be meant by this Precept of our Saviour, it could never be intended to forbid the Use of all Oaths in general, as, from a partial Observation of the bare Letter of the Text, some People have been so weak as to imagine.

I come now to consider the Text itself, which, to avoid such a critical Examination of the several Parts of it, as would be of use but to few of my Hearers, I shall explain by a Paraphrase.

*Ye have heard, says our Saviour, that it has been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform*

*form unto the Lord thine Oaths*; i. e. what-  
 soever thou dost either promise or assert  
 upon Oath, thou must take care, if it  
 be an Assertion, that it be true; and if  
 it be a Promise, that it be punctually  
 fulfilled; as thou wouldest answer for  
 the contrary to the Lord thy God, by  
 whose holy Name thou swearest. This  
 is the Substance of what you under-  
 stand to have been said upon this Sub-  
 ject by *Moses*, in several Precepts and  
 Directions of the Law; in Consequence  
 of which, provided you swear to the  
 Truth, and provided you do not swear  
 by the Name of God himself (from  
 which indeed you do religiously abstain)  
 you think your selves at Liberty to use  
 any less solemn Oath, upon the most  
 trifling Occasions that can happen; by  
 which means, it seems, some Forms of  
 Swearing are at last become so familiar  
 to you, that you begin to think they  
 may be lawfully used, without exposing  
 you to the Guilt of Perjury. But I say  
 unto you, that even these secondary

SERM.  
 XV.  
 ~~~~~

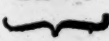
SERM. Forms of Swearing, which you think
XV. so very innocent and insignificant, are
too solemn to be so profaned. *Swear
not at all* therefore in your ordinary
Discourse (for of Judicial Cases I am
not speaking) but swear not, I say, in
your ordinary Discourse, not so much
as by the Heaven, or the Earth, or any
other of those secondary Oaths, in
which, though the Name of God is not
expressly mentioned, yet at least it is in-
tentionally implied. For whosoever
swears by Heaven, does, in Effect,
swear by Him that is enthroned in it;
whosoever swears by the Earth, swears
by him that presides over it, and go-
verneth it; whosoever swears by *Jerusa-
lem*, swears by him to whom it is pe-
culiarly appropriated; and whosoever
swears by his own Head, or any Crea-
ture in which he seems to have a Pro-
perty himself, does in effect swear by
him who made it what it is, and to
whom therefore it does most eminently
belong. As therefore these, and such
like

like Oaths, do all terminate and center SERM.
in God, they must not be admitted in- XV.
to your ordinary Discourse. Let it be
sufficient, on such Occasions, to say,
Yea, Yea; or Nay, Nay: Be content
with a serious Affirmation or Denial,
*for whatsoever is more than these, cometh
of Evil*; i. e. It proceeds from the
Treachery which is amongst you, that
you have need upon every trivial Oc-
casion to give such Proofs of your up-
right Dealing; and it proceeds from
some evil Principle in your Hearts, or
the Suggestions of some evil Spirit that
has an Influence over them, that you
are so forward upon all Occasions, by
Implication at least, *to take the Name of
the Lord your God in vain.*

Thus much for the Meaning of the
Precept itself, which having thus opened
and explained to you, I proceed now
to the *Second* Thing proposed, which
was,

II. To consider the Doctrine contain-
ed in it.

SERM. The Practice of Swearing in our ordinary Discourse, which is the only thing forbidden in my Text, is in our time become so very general and prevailing, that (if we consider how little can be said in the Defence of it) one would think it had not been forbidden, but commanded. For a Man, without proposing either Pleasure or Advantage, to fly in the Face of Almighty Power, by daily repeating the most provoking Indignities, is a Practice so stupid and absurd, as well as wicked, that common Sense cannot find a Name for it; and one would wonder how Satan himself, with all his Cunning, should have found Means to countenance and support it. A few would have shudder'd at such dreadful Imprecations as Christians utter without Horror or Remorse. As if the common Forms of Blasphemy grew tiresome by Repetition, they are continually diversifying their Phrases with such a strange Collection of new-invented Curses, that one would think they

they made it their Study to dishonour the SERM.
Name of God, and strove who should XV.
be most eloquent in profaning it. 

What shall we say to these Things?
Can those who do thus, be ignorant of
their Guilt? If not, to what purpose
should we tell them of it? Or do they
want only to be put in mind of it?
However it be, it is our Duty to repre-
sent the Case to them, and leave the rest
to the Grace of God.

First then, I desire it may be seri-
ously considered, that when Men give
themselves such a Liberty in their or-
dinary Discourse, the Guilt of Perjury
can hardly be avoided: For, as *in a*
Multitude of Words there wanteth not
Sin, and among other Sins, Falshood in
particular; so whenever there is a Mul-
titude of Oaths too, they will be some-
times accompanied with Falshood as well
as Truth, and be used to attest both
promiscuously.

Secondly, Let it be considered further,
that as an awful Sense of Oaths tends
to

SERM. to the Establishment of Peace and Order, and to the Well-being of Societies
XV. *in general, so the profane and irreligious Use of them does, on the contrary, tend to weaken their Evidence, and consequently to destroy that useful End, which they were instituted and intended to promote.*

Thirdly, Let us reflect on what has been said already, concerning Oaths taken seriously and devoutly; and let us consider, that to swear rashly is the Reverse of it; it is acting as if God was either ignorant of our Guilt, or had not Justice or Power enough to punish it; either of which is such a blasphemous Suggestion, as is almost too shocking to be spoken of.

Lastly, If there were nothing else to be considered in this Matter, but the positive Prohibition of God himself, methinks *That* should be enough to move us; especially in a Matter wherein it would be so easy to comply, and wherein there is no Temptation to the contrary,

trary. For let any Man, who makes SERM.
so free with the Name of God, con- XV.
sider how he himself should like to be ~~~~~
so wilfully disobeyed by an Inferior,
in any such strict and peremptory
Command; and then he will see in
what Light he stands before *our Father*
which is in Heaven; and have Reason
to admire that lingering Justice, which
could not be provoked by such repea-
ted Indignities, to execute its Vengeance
sooner.

I have purposely forborn to enlarge
on these Points, because I would re-
commend them to those who are guil-
ty, as an Employment for their private
Thoughts; and if they will but reflect
upon them seriously, they will soon
find, that as short as they are, they
will afford Matter enough for their
Meditation, and by the Grace of God,
most effectually convince them of the
Necessity of a speedy Change: As,
on the other hand, if any one in that
wretched State will not afford them
such

SERM. such a private Consideration, I am very
XV. sure, that for any Good they will do
Him, it is not worth my while to enlarge upon them.

I go on therefore, for the Benefit of those who are not quite so bad, to take Notice of that secondary kind of Oaths, by the Name of some Creature only, some of which you find specified in my Text, and of which there are a Multitude in common Use amongst Christians, so natural and familiar to the Tongues of some, that they seem to think they have no Meaning at all in them. The Case was just the same among the *Jews*: They had adopted these Oaths into their ordinary Discourse, that they might not be tempted to swear by any greater. In process of Time they were so prostituted and profaned, that they ceased to be considered any longer as Oaths, and were looked upon as Words of Course. To supply the Place of these, when they had Occasion to shew they were in Earnest, they

they were forced to make use of new SERM.
ones; which, for some time, gave a XV.
greater Air of Seriousness, and a great-
er Degree of Credit to their Discourse. 
This seems to have been the Founda-
tion of that Distinction in the 23^d of
St. *Matthew*, between swearing *by the*
Temple, and the Gold of it; and again,
between *swearing by the Altar, and by*
the Gift. Not that they could be so
stupid as to think there was any great-
er Degree of Sanctity in the latter;
but the former being plainly the more
obvious Oaths, might perhaps be worn
out before, *i. e.* they might be used so
familiarily about the meekest Trifles, that
the Scribes might from thence take Oc-
casion to declare, that he who made
use of them in his ordinary Conversa-
tion, might reasonably be presumed not
to have intended to swear, and conse-
quently might be excused from the Ob-
ligation. But for this their pretended
Accuracy, our Saviour reprimands them
very sharply, telling them, That what-
ever

SERM. ever Ideas they might please to annex
 XV. to this or that Form of Swearing, yet
 ~~~~~ the Obligation of the Oath would be  
 estimated according to the Nature of  
 the Thing, and not according to their  
 Arbitrary Interpretations. *Whether, says*  
*he, is greater, the Gift, or the Altar*  
*which sanctifieth the Gift?*

The same may be said of all Oaths  
 of this Nature, which are at present in  
 use among Christians. How little so-  
 ever we may mean by using them, yet  
 as they have in their Nature a Mean-  
 ing of their own, with a peculiar Re-  
 ference to Almighty God, they ought  
 not to be profaned. We may habi-  
 tuate ourselves, by constant Practice,  
 to the most sacred of all Oaths that  
 can be named, till it is attended with  
 no Horror in the speaking. But would  
 this be any Argument of our Inno-  
 cence? Why should it be thought then,  
 that in Oaths of a less solemn Nature,  
 our own Thoughtlessness and Inattention  
 should excuse us? For why did we *not*  
 attend



attend to it? That which we make SERM.  
 our Excuse, is our Fault. Whatever XV.  
 has any Relation to God, must never  
 be pronounced *without* Attention, *nay*,  
*never* without the utmost Reverence.  
 Some say, They mean nothing by it;  
 it is a mere Expletive for the Orna-  
 ment of their Discourse. And yet it  
 is plain, from the Manner of their using  
 it, that they expect it should add some  
 kind of Weight, that is, they expect to  
 make themselves believed by the Use of  
 an Expression which has no Meaning  
 in it. On the other hand, if they have  
 a Meaning, it must be such a one as  
 they cannot justify. The Oath must  
 terminate either in the Creatures them-  
 selves, according to the Sense in which  
 it was taken by the Heathens, from  
 whom most of these Forms were bor-  
 rowed; or else, according to the Notion  
 of the *Jews* about those Oaths which  
 they acknowledged to be binding, it  
 must be understood as having a Rela-  
 tion to the Creator: The former of  
 which

SERM. which would be downright Idolatry;  
 XV. and the latter, in those common Cases  
 ~~~~~ in which alone it is ever used, is Pro-  
 faneness. There are indeed some Forms
 of Speaking, which have a very near
 Affinity with these, and yet may be ve-
 ry lawfully used, as meaning no more,
 when they come to be explained, than,
*as surely as such a Thing is so, so sure is
 the Truth of what I tell you.* But as it
 requires some Nicety and Exactness to
 distinguish them from the others which
 are criminal, I shall not take upon me
 to mention them, it being better to a-
 void them utterly, than by needless in-
 sisting upon the Use of what we take
 to be innocent, run the Risk of pro-
 faning the Name of God, or giving
 Offence to those who think we do so.

I have done with the Oaths them-
 selves, and shall now examine the Ex-
 cuses that are made for them, the prin-
 cipal of which is, Heat of Passion; and
 so far at least this must be allowed to
 be an Excuse, That many of those who
 are

are more sparing at other times, are at SERM.
such times most profuse in their Execra- XV.
tions. But one Sin can never justify
another. Now Anger, indulged to
such a Vehemence as this, is itself a
very criminal Excess; inasmuch as it
flows from a Mind not sufficiently re-
signed to the Will of God, not mortifi-
ed and subdued to Vexations and
Disappointments, nor sensible of its own
Frailties and Imperfections. It is in-
deed a Sign that the Man is off his
Guard, and that he does not offend
wilfully and deliberately. But sure it is
but a slender Mitigation of one's Guilt,
that one is not altogether so presumptu-
ous as the worst. However, if Anger
is so apt to betray us into a Sin so ve-
ry heinous and offensive, why is not
some Care taken, when the Fit is off,
to prepare against the next Return of
it? Is it consistent, think you, with
that Reverence which we owe to God,
to know that there is a certain Passion,
which, whenever we are under the Do-

SERM. minion of it, never fails to transport
XV. us into the Breach of our Duty, and
yet to provide no Method for the Cure
of it? Or is Anger such a stubborn
and unruly Passion, that no Method
can be contrived to tame it? What if
every time the Fit was rising, we made
it a Rule to divert the Force of it, by
thinking on some other Thing? What
if, as some have very well advised, be-
fore we replied to a Provocation given
us, we should, for the better Recollec-
tion of our Reason, make a very short
Pause? Or, which is a better Way,
bestow the same Time upon a short Pe-
tition to be delivered from the ill Ef-
fects of Anger? This is no more than
may easily be done, without so much
as being observed by any one; the
Time to be employed about it being
no more than is sufficient to lift up our
Thoughts to Heaven, where they will
be received with as much Favour and
Approbation without the help of Words,
as with them. The Consequence of
which

which will be, that the Person who SERM.
makes this devout Request, is thereby XV.
not only put upon his Guard against
the Violence of the Temptation, so as
to do all in his own Power to oppose
it, but does likewise engage God's Suc-
cour and Assistance, which will be sure
to supply all Defects; enabling him to
do *that*, by virtue of the Divine Grace,
which by his own Power he was not a-
ble to effect.

But *Secondly*, Another Excuse which
is made for Common-Swearing, by those
who are more guilty than the former, is
the Force of Custom, which is what is
meant by those, who, when they are
reproved for this Offence, reply readi-
ly, That they cannot help it, *i. e.* the
Habit of Sinning is grown so invete-
rate, that by frequently repeating it,
they have lost the Government of their
Tongues, which are thereby become the
Servants of another Master, and are
constantly ready for the Service of *Sa-*
tan, to utter every thing that he sug-
gests.

SERM. gests. But is it not worth while for
XV. such Men as these to take some Pains
to subdue a Habit, which, if it continues, will inevitably destroy them? Or have they already given up the Point, as a Thing utterly impracticable; and so go on cheerfully in the Course they have begun, with the Prospect of eternal Ruin? If so, there is nothing more to be said; they must even persist in their obstinate Disobedience, till they are awakened by the due Reward of it. But if there be any thing in the Fear of this, sufficient to discourage them, it would surely be no hard Matter for a willing Mind to break loose from such a senseless Custom. Would it not be possible, for a valuable Consideration, to abstain for a single Day? If so, why not for Ten? Nay, why not for Months and Years? Would it not be worth while, in order to promote so good an End, to be more sparing of our Words in general? Is any Thing, the wisest of us says, of so much Consequence,

sequence, either to our selves or others, SERM.
that we need venture our eternal Hap- XV.
piness, for the bare Pleasure of hearing
ourselves say it? Where would be the
Harm, if to subdue such a stubborn
Enemy, we would learn to practise a
little Self-Denial in the great Article of
Impertinent Discourse? What if we
should resolve, till this Work was fi-
nished, to say nothing but what is strict-
ly necessary? I mention this, as the
utmost Hardship a Man can possibly
be put to, to get rid of the most inve-
terate Habit. And surely it is worth
while to try it, when no less than our
eternal Happiness is at stake; not but
if any Man, who is thoroughly per-
suaded of the Necessity of reforming
this vicious Habit, will pray to God
for his Grace to assist him in so necessa-
ry a Work, I think I need not scruple
to assure him, it may be done upon
much easier Terms.

But *Thirdly*, The worst of all Excuses
that are made for this wicked Practice,

SERM. is the Necessity of doing it, in many
XV. Cases, in order to obtain among our
Equals, Credit, and among our Inferi-
ors, Authority and Respect. Con-
cerning which let it be first observed,
That he who makes such an Excuse as
this, does fairly acknowledge, that he
sins wilfully and deliberately. He does
not pretend to say he cannot help it.
There is an End most considerately pro-
posed by it, for the sake of which he
thinks fit to commit the Sin, and run
the Hazard of the future Punishment.
Now when a Man is so daring and pre-
sumptuous as this, it is in vain to talk
to him about the Heinousness of the Sin.
For about this he professes himself to
have no Concern. I shall shew there-
fore, that he is mistaken in his Policy;
that the End he aims at, is not to be
so gain'd; and that the Practice of
Common-Swearing, whatever he may
think of it, will procure him neither
Credit nor Respect.

For *First*, as to procuring him Cre-SERM.
dit among his Equals, shall I believe a XV.
Man, who is continually convincing me
by every Word he speaks, that he makes
no Conscience of any thing? or is that
Man, think you, fit to be believed,
who makes no Scruple upon the slight-
est Occasions, to provoke Almighty
Vengeance? If the Fear of God is no
Restraint upon him, what Reason can I
have to trust him? His Regard, he
will say, to his own Credit and Repu-
tation; which is as much as to own,
that if he were sure to be undiscover-
ed, he would make no Conscience of
deceiving you. And is this all the
Credit a Man can hope to gain, by the
Loss of his eternal Happiness? The same
that we allow to the worst Men upon
Earth? If so, how much better were
it to avoid the Sin, and take our Chance
to be believed without it! Promises
and Protestations, Vows and Curses, do
but render what we say, suspected;
whereas Honesty and Simplicity, with-

SERM. out taking any Pains about it, are sure of
XV. being credited and believed. Let a

Man be but strictly just; let him be punctual in all his Dealings; let him be careful of what he says and does; let him be free from Lyes as well as Oaths, and he will soon be Master of more Credit than any Man can gain by Swearing.

But *Secondly*, As this blasphemous Abuse of Oaths is by no means fitted to gain Credit among our Equals, so neither has it any better Pretence to procure Authority or Respect among Inferiors. It is true, that an Inferior may be sometimes silenced by boisterous and outrageous Clamours; but what Opinion must a Servant or Inferior, if he be a good Man, entertain of such a wicked Master? Must he not despise and condemn him? Must he not think him, in one Respect, inferior even to *him*, however Circumstances of Birth and Fortune may have made him in another Respect his Superior? Vice is a great Leveller of all Distinctions;

tions; and no Man will ever preserve SERM.
his Authority by the Forfeiture of his XV.
Virtue, any more than he can cause
himself, by the most skilful Management, to be at once both respected and despised. On the other hand, if this Servant or Inferior, whose Obedience you are endeavouring to secure, should chance to be as wicked as your self, as the Example of so ill a Master may very probably make him, what Authority can you expect to preserve, what Obedience is it likely should be performed by one, who has no Sense of his Duty to your common Master? Let but the Fear of God take Possession of our Hearts, and it will not fail to produce a suitable Behaviour in all Circumstances and Relations of Life. But destroy *that*, and there is no Security that we shall do our Duty in any Station we possess: There is no knowing how to govern or obey: In a Word, there is no Hope of our being either good Masters, or good
Ser-

SERM. Servants, good Neighbours, or good
XV. Men.

~~~~~ And now, I think enough has been  
said to discourage you from a Practice  
so wicked and absurd. If any thing  
more is necessary to be added, it should  
be a short Exhortation to those who  
are as yet free from this Sin, to take  
heed, lest they suffer it to steal upon  
them from the Examples of any pro-  
fligate Companions; as well as to those  
who are but young Beginners, to  
draw back betimes, before they have  
either multiplied the Number of their  
Sins, or increased the Habit of Sin-  
ning. And if any of those who hear  
me this Day, are so unhappy as to  
be tempted to the Commission of this  
Sin, by those whom it is their Duty  
to love and honour, and who ought  
therefore to teach them better (for  
some such Parents and Masters *to be*  
*sure* there are, who, instead of check-  
ing their Children and Servants whom  
they



they find guilty of this Sin, do but encourage them to it by their own scandalous Examples) if this, I say, should be the Case of any of you, let it be considered, that tho' the Parent or Master will severely answer for his Misbehaviour in this Case, yet this will by no means excuse the misguided Child or Servant, who, contrary to his own better Judgment, is drawn into a Resemblance of his Parent's or Master's Vice. On the other hand, what an exalted Piece of Virtue would it be in the more intelligent Child, not only to draw back *himself*, and from henceforth to preserve his Conscience unsullied, though encompassed and beset with Dangers; but also by a more conspicuous Exactness in his Behaviour, become a Pattern and Example even to his Parents! God grant that by this, or whatever other Means to his Wisdom shall seem most expedient, we may be all brought to a just Sense of our Duty,

SERM. ty, in this great and important Article,  
XV. remembring always the great Abhor-  
rence which God has exprest to this  
Sin in particular, declaring solemnly,  
that *he will not hold him guiltless, that  
taketh his Name in vain.*





*We are to prove, and then hold  
fast that which is good.*

A

# S E R M O N

Preached at a VISITATION.

---

J O H N i. 46.

*And Nathaniel said unto him, Can there  
any good Thing come out of Nazareth?  
Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*



THE two Persons concerned SERM.  
in this Dialogue, were both XVI.  
of them Men of upright In-  
tentions; both of them sin-  
cere in their different Persuasions, and  
acting

SERM. acting upon true Principles of Con-  
 XVI. science. The only Difference to be ob-  
 served in their Characters, is, that *Philip* had received *Jesus* as the Messiah; but *Nathaniel*, for want of Evidence to convert him, stuck fast to his *Jewish* Prejudices; and if he had ever heard of the Name of *Jesus*, had hitherto rejected him as an Impostor. *Philip*, however, was so well assured of his Sincerity as to believe, that by proper Arguments he might be persuaded to renounce his Error. Accordingly, in the foregoing Verse he attempts it. *Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph*; to which *Nathaniel* replies in my Text, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* And *Philip*, without answering his Objection, appeals only to his own Judgment and Understanding, inviting him to come and see.

Now



*hold fast that which is good.* III

Now because it may be the Case of SERM.  
any of us to labour under Prejudices, XVI.  
like *Nathaniel*; and because it is the  
Duty of all Christians in general, more  
especially those who bear Office in the  
Church, to endeavour, like *St. Philip*,  
to the utmost of their Power, to re-  
move them out of the Minds of others,  
I shall take Occasion from the Behavi-  
our of these two righteous Persons, to  
consider our own Duty in both these  
Respects, by calling to your Remem-  
brance such Rules and Directions for  
Practice, as their Examples do natural-  
ly suggest. The only Thing observa-  
ble in the Character of *Nathaniel*, is  
the Nature of the Prejudice he had im-  
bibed; *Can there any good Thing come out*  
*of Nazareth?* *Nazareth* was, it seems,  
a poor despicable City, or, as some say,  
a small Village of *Galilee*; and *Galilee* it  
self was so odious to the *Jews*, that the  
very Name of *Galilean* was a Reproach.  
*Thou hast vanquished me, O Galilean,*  
was the Acknowledgment of one, who  
in

SERM. in the Bitterness of his Heart could not  
 XVI. help blaspheming his Conqueror, at  
 { the same time that he confessed his  
 Power. The same Title was given also to the Apostles, who, till they changed it for the Name of Christians at *Antioch*, were constantly styled *Nazarenes* and *Galileans*; for the same Reason *Jesus* was called the *Nazarene*, as were also the first Converts to Christianity, who, though they were far from being ashamed of the Appellation (as we may see from *St. Peter's Use* of it in the third Chapter of the *Acts*) seem nevertheless to have it fixed on them by their Enemies, with a malicious Design to make their Persons despicable, and bring their Doctrines into Disrepute.

Now all the Foundation of this Prejudice against *Galilee*, besides an antient Dislike that was taken to it upon the Account of its corrupt Religion, was, that *out of Galilee no Prophet had arisen*; from whence it was very weakly and preposterously concluded, that out of  
*Galilee*

*hold fast that which is good.* 113

Galilee no Prophet could arise. It is SERM.  
easy at this Distance of Time to see XVI.  
the Absurdity of such Reasoning as ~  
this; and yet the Strength of the Pre-  
judice was then so great, that it misled  
the wisest Men amongst them. You  
find it urged by the great Consistory  
of the Nation to *Nicodemus*, who was  
himself a Doctor of the Law, *Search*  
*and see, for out of Galilee ariseth no*  
*Prophet.* He is appealed to as a Man  
of Learning and Judgment, capable of  
searching into the Grounds of the Tra-  
dition; and yet, though he was desi-  
rous to vindicate our Saviour, he ne-  
ver offers to make a Reply to the Ob-  
jection. From all this it is natural to  
observe, how far the Prejudices of  
Education may carry us; how the wild-  
est and most inconclusive Reasoning  
may pass for solid and substantial Ar-  
gument, the crudest and most indigest-  
ed Notions be admitted for established  
Truths, when they are supported by  
Popular Opinion, and the plausible

SERM. Pretence of a religious Zeal. Such

XVI. Objections as were urged by the *Jews*

— against *Christ*, are still urged against the Christian Church; I mean against that pure and reformed Part of it which is, by God's Blessing, established in these Realms. *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* was the Question of the unbelieving *Jews*. Can there any good Thing come out of *Rome*? Can a Church built out of the Ruins of Popery, and which retains so many of her needless Ceremonies, be a truly Apostolick Church? is the Question of our Dissenting Brethren. On the other hand, it is argued with as much Warmth by the *Romanists*, Can there any good thing come from the Spirit of the Reformers? Can Men of such Passions and Resentments, who appear by their whole Conduct and Behaviour to have been acted either by Avarice or Revenge, be supposed to have intended the Good of Mens Souls, or to have had the Interests



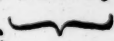
*hold fast that which is good.* 115

rests of Religion at Heart? Was not SERM.  
the Reformation accomplished with such XIV.  
Views and Motives, and upon such  
Principles of Human Policy, as fa-  
vour'd more of this World than the  
next? Now these, and such like Que-  
stions, whether they have any Founda-  
tion in Fact, or no, are quite beside  
the Subject in Dispute. The Way to  
discover whether *Jesus* were the Mes-  
siah, was to consider his Life and Ac-  
tions, his Doctrines and his Miracles,  
and if they agreed with the Descrip-  
tion given by *Moses* and the Prophets,  
no matter in what City he was educa-  
ted, nor what opprobrious Titles he  
might bear. So again, in our Disputes  
at present, if we would know whether  
the Religion professed in this Nation,  
be the Religion of Christ, or no, we  
have nothing to do, but to consult our  
Bibles; and if it appears to be *built*  
*upon the Foundation of the Apostles and*  
*Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the*  
*chief Corner-Stone*, no matter by what

SERM. Means the Reformation was effected,  
XVI. nor out of what Church we sprung.

~~~~~ But it is the Fault of all Sects and Parties, that they first conceive an ill Opinion of their Adversaries, and then refuse to hearken to their Arguments. It is Pity, so good a Religion as ours, should be taken up upon no better Grounds. But if we will harbour such Prejudices and Aversions, it is more our Good-Fortune, than our Merit, that we are ever in the Right. For, upon the same Grounds that we embrace a right Religion, we might, if our Birth and Education had led us to it, as readily have embraced a wrong one. It is the Advice of the Apostle *to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.* Instead of that, we resolve to hold fast one Thing, and reject all others, whether good or bad. Now what Virtue is there in such a Faith as this; or what can be pleaded in its behalf, that may not with as much Reason be urg'd against it? If  
People

hold fast that which is good. 117

People are not so candid and ingenuous, SERM.
as to allow the Arguments of their XVI.
Adversaries a fair Examination; in the 
first Place, if they are in the wrong, it
is plain they can never rectify their Er-
ror; and in the next Place, if they
happen to be right, which is more than
they can be sure they are, they will ne-
ver be able to convince an Adversary;
because it will appear from their whole
Conduct and Behaviour, that they are
governed by mere Prejudice and Par-
tiality.

But there is another very dangerous
Prepossession of this kind, which is ta-
ken, not against any Sect or Party, but
against the Persons and Characters of
Men. Now, when we happen to take
such a Distaste to our Teachers, there
cannot be a greater Hindrance to our
Reformation. Had *Nathaniel* continued
in his first Opinion, *that nothing good*
could come out of Nazareth, all that our
Saviour said, had been lost on him.
This, I am afraid, is a very common

SERM. Case. We first entertain an Aversion
XVI. to the Person, and then the best Advice is useless. And yet, if we would consider this Matter as we ought, the Blame would all fall upon our selves. For allowing the Person who undertakes to teach me, to be a wicked and immoral Man (which is the worst Case that can be supposed) yet why may not I be the better for his Instruction? He may very well understand his Duty, and know how to recommend it to others, tho' he has not the Grace to practise it. A Person that is serious and well-disposed, will not consider the Man, but the Doctrine; and I am afraid it is more the Fault of the Hearer than the Speaker, when an earnest Exhortation to the Practice of our Duty, does not meet with a suitable Effect. So again, with respect to the Preacher's Abilities; if I have not a great Opinion of his Parts and Learning, yet sure I may afford him my Attention. I hope no body who undertakes to
preach

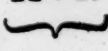
hold fast that which is good. 119

preach the Gospel, is unacquainted SERM.
with the plain Duties of Christianity; XVI.
and if so, there is none so ignorant
but the wisest of us may receive Benefit from his Advice. There are few who want to be taught their Duty so much, as to be put in mind of it; and if the Importance of the Subject will not excite our Attention, all the Treasures of Eloquence will be thrown away upon us. They may perhaps make an Impression upon the Ear, but they will never have an Influence upon the Heart; such a one, at least, as will be permanent and lasting, *and bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.*

But there is a strange Revolution in the State of Preaching, since it was first introduced amongst us. It was intended for the Hearer's Benefit; and he was content, while the Hour-Glass was running, to give Ear to the Physician of his Soul, who with great Freedom laid open his Maladies, and then prescribed a Method for the Cure of

SERM. them. But we are now grown such
 XVI. Casuists in Divinity, that no body
 thinks he wants Instruction. The
 Preacher is considered as a Person,
 who, for the Space of Half an Hour,
 is obliged, for the Diversion or Amuse-
 ment of his Audience, to stand the
 Mark of publick Censure. 'Tis a great
 Chance if any body is the better for
 him; and 'tis well if he preserves his
 Character. The Truth is, we sit down
 to a Sermon as to an Entertainment,
 where, beside the substantial Duties of
 Religion, we expect something of the
 Garniture of Art; some lofty Flight of
 Fancy, some Beauty or Majesty of Ex-
 pression, or some surprising Turn of
 Thought. If the Preacher has too
 just a Sense of what he is about, to
 gratify such itching Ears, we are sure
nothing good can come from him; so we
 even employ our Thoughts some other
 way, or compose our selves very com-
 fortably to sleep. Now I appeal to
 any sober and considerate Person, whe-
 ther

hold fast that which is good. 121

ther People who come to Church with SERM.
such Views and Expectations, are like- XVI.
ly to be the better for Instruction, and 
whether it be not more the Fault of
themselves, than their Teachers, if they
return no better Christians than they
came.

But I am afraid this ugly Prejudice
is sometimes carried further still, and
falls upon the whole Order in general.
Considering the Opinion which some
People form, or would make us be-
lieve they form of our Order, I should
think it no strange or surprising Que-
stion, Can there any good Thing come
from the Priesthood? Can People,
whose Business it is to teach us, and
who are maintained and supported for
so doing, be supposed to have any
other View in what they tell us, but
to secure their own Interest and Ad-
vantage? We must in Charity sup-
pose, that those who make this Objec-
tion, do not in their Hearts allow the
Force of it. Otherwise we may be
tempted

SERM. tempted to think, that they would not
XVI. scruple, if their Necessities required it,
~~~~~ to act such a Part themselves. However, if they do believe it in good earnest, they certainly lie under the greatest Disadvantage, the greatest Incapacity to receive Instruction, that Ignorance and Prejudice can expose them to. But here, I cannot but observe how unreasonable it is, that People who are such Advocates for the Liberty of Thinking, and call so loudly to have their own Notions consider'd, should condemn the Doctrines of a whole Order of Men, without allowing them the Favour of being heard. They have, doubtless, a Right to judge for themselves, and to examine all Arguments that are proposed to them, and it would be well if they did it more than they do. But it is a cruel and injurious Abuse of that Liberty, first to cast odious Reflexions upon the Name of their Adversaries, and then call Religion, Artifice. This is the Effect of  
down-



*hold fast that which is good.* 123

downright Prejudice, and directly con- SERM.  
trary to that favourite Notion, which XVI.  
they themselves seem so forward to ad-  
vance. But whosoever attempts to re-  
form Men's Manners, will be sure to  
meet with Enemies enough. To what  
else can we impute that Spirit of Cen-  
sure and Opposition, which the Mini-  
sters of Christ so often meet with, in  
the Discharge of their sacred Functions?  
that Readiness to expose their little Er-  
rors and Miscarriages, and sometimes to  
traduce even their Virtues; the Distaste  
and Aversion which Men conceive a-  
gainst their Duty, passes over to the  
Persons of those who teach it, and  
from their Persons to their Characters  
and Profession, till at last the very  
Name of their Order, through the pre-  
vailing Corruption of Men's Manners,  
comes to be treated with Ignominy and  
Contempt. Hence it is, that neither  
the Circumstances of their Fortune, nor  
the Qualities and Dispositions of their  
Mind, are weighed in the same Balance,  
or

SERM. or interpreted with the same favourable

XVI. Allowances, which are claimed by other

Men. A serious and composed Behaviour is Moroseness, and Chearfulness is Wantonness: To enjoy the Delights of Life is Sensuality; and to abandon them, Superstition or Hypocrisy: To be courteous and affable, is to be cringing and designing; and to be distant and reserved, is Pride: And in general, there is scarce any thing in their Conduct, however innocent and indifferent in itself, which does not contract an imaginary Malignity from the Character of the Person who performs it, and give an Occasion to his being censured, blackened, and defamed. It would be well, if those who are most forward in propagating, or most hasty in giving Credit to these unjustifiable Clamours, would consider what End they serve by it. If they are really concerned for the Interest of Religion, as they will all pretend they are, how do they think this End can be promoted, by striking at  
the

*hold fast that which is good.* 125

the Credit and Reputation of those, SERM.  
whose Business it is to propagate and XVI.  
support it? Why are they set up as  
the Marks of Obloquy and Derision,  
to the great Offence of unprejudiced  
Persons, who might otherwise be the  
better for their Instruction?

But to proceed with the Character  
of *Nathaniel*. Another Thing which  
deserves our Notice is, that notwithstanding  
the Prejudice he laboured under, he is represented as an honest Man.  
*Jesus* saw *Nathaniel* coming to him, and  
saith of him, *Behold an Israelite indeed,*  
*in whom is no Guile.* Now this noble  
Testimony was given to his Integrity,  
at a time when he had been just objecting  
to the Person of our Saviour, upon the  
Strength of the Prejudice he had conceived.  
A Thing which should be well considered  
by those, who will not allow the least  
Grain of Sincerity to People who are of a  
different Persuasion. We, who have so much  
Charity for each other, as to suppose all of  
our

SERM. our own Religion to be sincere, will  
XVI. allow *no* Quarter to our Adversaries.

— Proud and Obstinate, Wilful and Uncomplying, are the best Epithets we usually afford them; as if they differ'd with us for the mere Pleasure of Contention, and took a Delight in being persecuted and opposed. God forbid, that we should give way to the Errors of such Men, or allow them any Advantage to their Cause, but what Charity obliges us to allow them! But God forbid, that we should judge their Hearts, or charge them with persisting wilfully in an Error!

The Dissenters from the Discipline of our Church, we look upon as a peevish and perverse sort of People; and indeed, as they are sometimes treated, it is no Wonder if they are peevish and perverse. To charge Men with wilful Blindness, when they may be conscious of no such thing; to stigmatize them with reproachful Titles; and to magnify every Scruple into Sin, may very  
natu-



*hold fast that which is good.* 127

naturally excite their Zeal, which never SERM.  
exerts itself with more Warmth and XVI.  
Vigour, than when it is founded upon  
Prejudice and Mistake. As therefore  
these rash and uncharitable Censures are  
for the most part the Effect of Preju-  
dice, and as such can by no Means be  
justified, though they spring from a  
very laudable Design; so, if they were  
ever so justifiable, no wise Man would  
use them, because they have an ill Ef-  
fect on the Tempers of those People,  
for whose Benefit they should be prin-  
cipally designed; for, to tax Men with  
Pride and Obstinacy, is not the Way  
to make them less proud and obstinate  
than they are; but rather to exasperate  
and inflame them, to widen the Breach  
that is between us, and to furnish  
Matter for endless Jealousy and Dis-  
like.

I have done with the Character of  
*Nathaniel*, and the Observations I had  
to make from it: Which are, *First*, That  
we should be extremely careful lest we  
harbour

SERM. harbour any Prejudices ourselves : And  
 XVI. *Secondly*, That we should be very tender and indulgent when we observe them in other Men.

I come now to consider the Character of St. *Philip*, who appears, by the whole Interview with *Nathaniel*, to have had a hearty Concern to promote the Happiness of his Neighbour, and to have taken the best Method to effect it.

*First*, I say it appears from this Interview with *Nathaniel*, that he had a hearty Desire to promote the Happiness of his Neighbour. *Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.* It is observed, that the Words of the Evangelist imply something more than an accidental Meeting, and that it looks as if *Philip* went in quest of *Nathaniel*, on purpose to deliver *the glad Tidings of Salvation*. But whether this be so or not, it is plain he took the first Opportunity,

tunity, it being but the Day before, that SERM.  
he had the Happiness to be converted XVI.  
himself. This is a Practice which the  
Civility of the present Age has put almost out of Countenance. It is grown a very unfashionable Virtue to offer our Advice to any body, or to endeavour to make Men sensible of their Errors. But it is no more than our Religion requires of us; and whenever there is a Struggle between Virtue and Good Manners, every body knows which ought to prevail. It is a Happiness, indeed, to be Master of so much Address and Good-Breeding, as to do our Duty without giving Offence. But our Duty must be done, whatever Reception it may meet with: Nor is any Man, who has proper Opportunities for so doing, exempted from the great Work of Reformation. There is indeed an Order of Men, who are peculiarly set apart for this Purpose, and who lie under the strictest Obligations to execute their Commission faithfully:

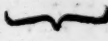
SERM. But this is no Excuse to private Christians, who are all obliged, in their respective Stations, to labour both for the Reformation of Sinners, and the Conversion of Unbelievers. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren,* was a Precept given to St. Peter only, but extending to *all* Christians in the World. It is a Duty founded in the Nature and Reason of the Thing, it being impossible there should be a Sense of Religion in the Heart, but it will break out in suitable Demonstrations. *For out of the Abundance of the Heart, the Mouth speaketh; and the Mouth of the Righteous therefore is exercised in Wisdom, and his Tongue will be talking of Judgment.*

It is possible indeed, for an injudicious Zeal to transport us beyond the Bounds of this Duty. We may exert it at such improper Seasons, in so rude and indecent a Manner, or upon Subjects so trifling and unnecessary, as may do the Patient more Harm than Good.

To



*hold fast that which is good.* 131

To enter into Disputes about little Ni-SERM-  
ceries and Distinctions, which have no XVI.  
Influence upon the Salvation of our   
Souls, may fill Men with a thousand  
needless Scruples, which tend only to  
disturb their Consciences. To admon-  
ish a Man of his Duty, either in the  
Presence of others, or while he is un-  
der the Transport of an unruly Passion,  
can never have a good Effect. The  
former will be interpreted as a Design  
to expose him, and must needs meet  
with a suitable Return: The latter is  
like pouring Oil upon a Fire. We  
must wait for an Intermision or Abate-  
ment of the Fever, before we can ap-  
ply our Medicine: Anger being an in-  
vincible Obstruction, even to the calm-  
est and most gentle Reproof, *like the*  
*deaf Adder, that stoppeth her Ears, and*  
*refuseth to hear the Voice of the Charmer,*  
*charm he never so wisely.* But to re-  
turn any sharp or opprobrious Language,  
to mix Anger and Invectives with our  
Admonitions, to be transported with

SERM. the same violent Emotions ourselves,  
 XVI. which render our Neighbour incapable  
 of Advice, is a worse and more dangerous Miscarriage. The Person who is thus admonished, cannot help observing, that we are not concerned for him, but for our selves. We shall be thought to have been acted by Pride and Vanity, and to have sought Occasion, from his Error or Miscarriage, to triumph in the Superiority of our own Virtue or Understanding. If we would do this Work successfully, we must go about it in another Manner: In the Hours of Privacy and Retirement, when the Heart is disengaged from Passion, and when there can be no Suspicion of our designing any thing but our Neighbour's Benefit and Advantage: And even then it must be done gently and tenderly; it must *come down like the Rain into a Fleece of Wool, even as the Drops that water the Earth.* With these Cautions we may go on and prosper, and be intitled to a Reward at  
 that

*hold fast that which is good.* 133

that Day, when those who have brought SERM.  
many to Righteousness, shall begin to shine XVI.  
out like the Stars for ever and ever. ~~~~~

Thus much for the Method of admonishing our Neighbours, and reclaiming them from their sinful Courses. But if we have a mind to reform their Faith too, we must take with us the *Second* Thing observable in the Character of *St. Philip*, I mean, his Method of convincing *Nathaniel*, by inviting him to come and see.

Sight is the most noble of all the Senses, the least liable to be abused or imposed upon. For which Reason it is by a Metaphor applied to the Understanding; and a Man is said to see the Truth of a Proposition, when it is demonstrated to him by the Deductions of his Reason. In this Sense it was meant by *St. Philip*, who did not invite *Nathaniel* to see the Person of our Saviour only, but to see the Truth of his own Assertion; to see whether the Person he recommended as the *Messiah*,

SERM. were in truth the *Messiah* or no. In  
 XVI. making this Judgment, he was at li-  
 ~~~~~ berty to use all his Senses, and to ex-  
 ercise his Reason to the full. And ac-
 cordingly his Conversion was effected,
 not by the *Sight* of our Saviour only,
 but by the Words which he heard him
 utter. *Jesus*, upon his first appearing,
 discovered to him the very Secrets of
 his Heart, to which none but God and
 his own Soul were Witnesses. This
 was what moved him to cry out as he
 did, in a Transport of Astonishment
 and Joy, *Thou art the Son of God, thou
 art the King of Israel.*

You see then, St. *Philip's* Method of
 Persuasion, was an Appeal to the Evi-
 dence of Reason, which is indeed the
 only Foundation upon which Faith can
 securely stand. But the Wisdom of
 some Reformers has introduced a new
 Method of Conviction, by applying to
 the Sense of Feeling only. Racks and
 Gibbets have been substituted in the
 Room of Syllogisms, and esteemed
 most

hold fast that which is good. 135

most effectual Arguments to convince SERM.
stubborn and unrelenting Sinners. He- XVI.
refy, they thought, was so obstinate a
Distemper, that it would yield to no-
thing but Cauteries and Incisions; and
whatever Symptoms the Disease ap-
peared with, it was their constant Me-
thod to scorch and scarify. But after
all, *these wholesome Severities* never
met with the intended Effect: The
Patients died under the Operation, but
the Infection gathered Strength. The
Religion which they designed to extir-
pate, grew daily more prevalent than
ever, insomuch that it became a Pro-
verb among the Sufferers, *That the Blood
of the Martyrs was the Seed of the
Church.* And it is no Wonder it
should have this Effect. The Num-
ber of Converts could not but in-
crease, while one side shewed so much
Faith and Constancy, and the other so
little Charity. Men will not be beat
out of their Opinions, while they are
assaulted with Rage and Cruelty from
K 4 with-

SERM. without, and supported by Sincerity
XVI. from within. Hardship and Oppres-
sion, though it may tempt Men to
conceal their *Principles*, will never en-
lighten their Understandings; and what-
ever Methods may have been attempt-
ed to repair the Weakness of the na-
tural Eyesight, it was never known
that the intellectual Vision was cleared
up by the Effusion of Blood, or the
sovereign Remedy of Starving. For
this Reason there was another Expe-
dient contriv'd, as unnatural and pre-
posterous as the former. Because Peo-
ple could not be prevailed on to see
just as their Teachers would have them,
it was agreed to keep them utterly in
Darkness. An Artifice never practis'd
with Success, till it was introduced by
the Church of *Rome*. There was once
indeed a capricious Philosopher, who
put out his own Eyes to give his Rea-
son the fairer Play: But it was a
wilder Project, to extinguish the Light
of Reason, in order to make way for
Religion.

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Religion. That Church indeed, as she SERM.
has very good Reason, appears to be XVI.
a great Enemy to Light. For which
End, she very prudently resolves to
persuade her Children to shut their
Eyes. If they will but gratify her in this
reasonable Request, she promises to
make them ample Satisfaction by the
Assistance of an Infallible Guide, who
shall, to all Intents and Purposes, as ef-
fectually secure them against Error, as
if they enjoyed their Eyesight. By
this Means they will be *one Fold under*
one Shepherd, free from those Jealousies
and Animosities which rend and di-
vide the Church; and, which is a
greater and more invaluable Privilege,
they will be eased of the intolerable
Burden of Thinking. Besides this, they
will be delivered from all Doubts and
Perplexities which disturb the Minds
of Hereticks; and instead of working
out their Salvation with Fear and
Trembling, may go on securely in
the

SERM. the Way to Heaven, under his auspicious Influence and Direction. XVI.

Especially if they will but exchange their earthly Treasures for the sacred Merchandize of Pardons and Indulgences, and fill the Church's Coffers by their Repentance. It is no Wonder that such Promises as these should, upon weak Minds, have a wonderful Effect. But because there are some wilful People that think it a Punishment to shut their Eyes, she has contrived a Method to gratify them too, by diverting their Attention from the solid Duties of Religion, and fixing it upon Pomp and Shew. What else is the Meaning of those grand Parades and Processions, those formal and superstitious Observances, those gaudy Ceremonies, those solemn Fopperies, which make up the greatest Part of her Worship? In this Sense, the Church of Rome may boast with great Truth, that she invites her Votaries to come and see.

hold fast that which is good. 139

see. But alas! this is a slender Re-SERM.
compence for that total Blindness which XVI.
in the mean time overspreads their
Understandings, keeping them Slaves
and Bigots to the most senseless Set
of Doctrines that can be obtruded up-
on any People in the World. In the
mean time, lest the Light of the glo-
rious Gospel of Christ should shine
unto them, it is by her Care with-
drawn from their Eyes. *That Word,*
which should be a Lamp unto their Feet,
and a Light to their Paths, is removed
from publick View, into the Cells
and Cloisters of the Learned, who are
too wise, it seems, to make a proper
Use of it: So that the Vulgar are ir-
recoverably tied down to their Errors,
and destitute of all Methods of Con-
viction.

Such was the State of this sinful
Nation, *till the Spirit of God began to*
move upon our Hearts, and the Voice
of Reformation, *like that of the crea-*
ting

SERM.*ting* Power, founded through these Regions of Darkneſs, *Let there be Light, and there was Light.* Blessed be God, that this Happineſs is ſtill continued to us; that we are allowed the free Exerciſe of our Reaſon, and have Acceſs to the Word of God, *like Iſrael, who had Light in their Dwellings,* while all *Egypt* was overcaſt with Darkneſs. How much Reaſon have we to look up with Gratitude to the great Author of this bleſſed Change! How much Reaſon to guard againſt the Deſigns of our Enemies, who would fain reduce us into that State of Servitude, from which we have been ſo wonderfully delivered! And how much Reaſon to value thoſe ſacred Writings, which firſt reſcued us from Superſtition and Ignorance, and will ſtill preſerve us, if we are not wanting to ourſelves, from the Deluſion of Satan, and from the Artifices of deſigning Men! God grant that we may conſider

hold fast that which is good. 141

sider them as we ought, and apply SERM.
them to their proper Use, that they XVI.
may lead us in this World into the
Knowledge of his Truth, and in the
World to come unto everlasting Life.

Now to God the Father, &c.





A
S E R M O N

Preached before the

K I N G.

MATT. vi. 11.

Our Father which art in Heaven.

SERM.
XVII.



THE Duty of making our Requests to God, with a proper Sense of our Dependance on him, is a Matter of such infinite Moment and Concern to us, that it never can be too frequently considered. And these Words, being well known to be the Entrance, or Introduction to
that

that excellent Form of Prayer, which SERM.
our Saviour compos'd for the Use of XVII.
his Disciples, and in them for the whole
Christian Church, may be supposed to
convey to us such an Idea of the supreme
Being, as it is fit we should entertain,
when we approach the Throne of Grace,
to make our Prayers and Supplications
to him.

And doubtless, whatever Notions
are fit to be entertained, either of the
Nature or Attributes of God, or of the
Relation which he bears to us, when
we are actually employed, by the Di-
rection of our Lord, in paying Wor-
ship and Adoration to him; the same
it is very proper to preserve in our
Minds, as much as possible, at all Times
and Places; not only to keep us con-
stantly and habitually prepared for the
Exercise of this necessary Duty, but al-
so to dispose us to the Practice of *all*
Duties, to which a right Apprehension
of God's Nature and our own, is of
all things the most likely to conduce.

Since

SERM. Since therefore the great Author and
 XVII. Preserver of our Being, is represented in
 my Text under the Character of a Fa-
 ther, and particularly distinguished from
 our earthly Parents, by his Residence
 or Abode in Heaven; it may be worth
 while to consider the true Import of the
 Words, and what we are to understand,
 when we address our selves to God in
 this Form, which our Lord has taught
 us.

And *First*, By the Title or Character
 of Father, is represented the Relation be-
 tween God and us, as he gave us our
 Life and Being. It was he that form-
 ed our first Parent *Adam*, and *breathed*
into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, so
that Man became a living Soul: And it
 was he, that established that wonderful
 Order, by which a successive Race of
 Men is perpetually arising, and shall
 continue so to do, to the End of the
 World, when Life shall *be swallowed up*
in Immortality. The Parents we have
 had according to the Flesh were but In-
 struments

struments or Means in the Hands of SERM.
 his Providence, to bring about his most XVII.
 gracious Purposes. It was his Good-
 ness that willed it, his Wisdom that
 contrived it; and it is by virtue of his
 absolute and supreme Dominion, that
 the whole Race is not utterly extinct.
 And in this Sense, as he gave Being to
 the Species at first, and continues at all
 Times to give Life to the Individual,
 not only we Christians, but Mankind
 in general, may very properly call God
 their Father.

But *Secondly*, There is another Sense,
 wherein *Christians* are entitled, through
 the wonderful Goodness and Condescen-
 sion of God, more peculiarly to call
Him their Father; inasmuch as having
 forfeited their *Relation* to him by being
 wicked and disobedient Children, they
 were called again on Condition of
 Amendment, to be *his Children by Adop-*
tion and Grace; whereby they are assured,
 by God's special Promise, of many Pri-
 vileges they had lost before, and are ad-

SERM. mitted to a nearer and more intimate
 XVII. Relation to the great Fountain of their
 ~~~~~ Life and Being.

This is indeed the only Scripture-Sense, in which Christians are called *the Sons of God*: The natural Relation between God and us being there supposed to be quite cancell'd and destroyed, and a new one introduced, not grafted on the old, but independent and exclusive of it. The natural Man is supposed to have been dead, and a new Creature to be substituted in his Room: The Change which is wrought by Baptism on his Heart, is called *a new Birth unto Righteousness*; and the Person thus entering into Covenant with God, is understood (not to be converted, reformed, or altered, but) regenerate, or born again. And from hence came that Notion which obtained once among Christians, that Persons baptized were so divested of themselves, that they lost all Distinctions of Blood and Family, and for the future had no other Relation to each



each other, than as they were knit to-  
gether and united in Christ.

SERM.

XVII.

But however this be, it is very plain  
from Scripture, that by virtue of this  
mystical or figurative Death, by which  
*the old Man is crucified with his Affections  
and Lusts, and the new Man is put on,*  
which according to God is created in  
*Righteousness and true Holiness,* we re-  
ceive a new Right to call God our  
Father, which by Nature we could not  
have: And that, in such a Sense, as  
carries with it an Assurance of great Fa-  
vour and Affection to us, and gives us  
Reason to expect that as we are Sons,  
we shall be Heirs, *Heirs of God, and  
joint Heirs with Christ.* And this is the  
last and most considerable Kind of Re-  
lation between God and Us, arising  
from *that Spirit of Adoption in our Hearts,*  
*whereby we cry Abba, Father.* But  
there is another Sense in which God  
may be called our Father, arising from  
the Experience of his Goodness to us in  
every Circumstance and Occurrence of

SERM.our Lives. How often should we per-  
 XVII.rish by our own wisest Projects, if he  
 ~~~~~ did not in his Mercy, either frustrate  
 and disappoint them, or turn them to
 our Advantage by such Means, and
 in such a Manner, as we should have
 thought the most unlikely to succeed?
 How often should we sink under the
 Weight of Evils, brought upon us by
 our own Faults and Follies, if we were
 not rescued by his fatherly Care? Nay
 how should we subsist or preserve our
 Beings, if his Bounty did not con-
 stantly relieve our Wants, *giving us*
Rain from Heaven and fruitful Seasons,
filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness.
 The Lines and Marks of God's general
 Providence are very visible in the great
 Book of Nature, from which it appears,
 that he *is loving unto all, and that his*
Mercy is over all his Works. Besides
 these, many Instances of a more im-
 mediate Providence, aiding and assisting us
 in every Action of our Lives, we must
 be very inattentive, if we have not ob-
 served,

served, and very unthankful, if we for-
get. He therefore who thus governs
and directs our Actions, who protects
our Persons, who supplies our Wants,
who preserves our Being, who promotes
our Happiness by Ways and Means un-
known to us, may very properly be
styled a Father; in like manner as we give
the same Title to Men, when in Com-
pliance with the Dictates of Humanity
and Compassion, they are forward to
promote the Happiness of others; such
Men, we are apt to say, have been Fa-
thers to us, inasmuch as they have treat-
ed us with the same Tenderness and
Affection, as a dutiful, and obedient,
and deserving Child might expect from
an indulgent Parent. When Actions like
these are not limited and confined to
the Advantage of any *single* Person, but
are of a general and *publick* Nature, ex-
tending to the Benefit of a whole *Com-
munity*, and calculated for the Relief of
Multitudes: The Person who thus acts
in an elevated Station, distributing li-
berally

SERM. berally God's Blessings among his Fel-
 XVII. low Creatures, is by the consenting
 ~~~~~ Testimonies of all grateful Hearts, for  
 the same Reason called the Father of his  
 Country. Much more may we call  
 him, who is the Giver of these Gifts,  
 who first bestows the Power, and then  
 the Will to do Good, on such his Re-  
 presentatives on Earth, much more may  
 we call him our Father. But

*Thirdly*, When therefore in Obedi-  
 ence to our Lord's Commands, we put  
 up our Petitions to Almighty God in  
 this excellent Form of Prayer, it will  
 behove us in our private Devotions at  
 least, in the Exercise of which we may  
 take our own Time, and are therefore  
 at Liberty to dwell as long as we please  
 on any one or more Parts of the Prayer;  
 it will behove us, I say, in our private  
 Devotions, as often as we address our  
 selves to Almighty God by the Title and  
 Character of Father, to consider him in  
 these several Views. *First*, as he crea-  
 ted us. *Secondly*, as he preserves us.  
 And

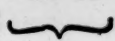


And *Thirdly*, as he has adopted us for SERM.  
Sons. With these Considerations the XVII.  
very Use of the Word will become an  
Act of Praise and Thanksgiving, not  
a Title only to denote that Being, to  
whom we offer up our Prayer, but the  
Testimony or Acknowledgment of  
grateful Hearts, that are sensible of  
God's Mercy to us, in giving us our  
Being, in protecting us from Danger,  
and in calling us to the Adoption of  
Sons. And indeed it is impossible in  
our Privacy and Retirement, to think  
on these things with any great Attenti-  
on, but the Heart will melt and over-  
flow with Gratitude to so amiable and  
kind a Being, who called us out of no-  
thing to the Exercise of Reason, to the  
Enjoyment of those Blessings, which he  
pours out about us, and above all to  
the Contemplation of his own Nature  
and Attributes, on which there is Room  
to be perpetually employed in new  
Acts of Delight and Wonder : Who pre-  
serves us in this State through the Great-

SERM. ness of his Mercy, notwithstanding our  
XVII. Endeavours to provoke his Vengeance

— by our wilful Disobedience to him:  
Nay, who rescues us from this State of  
Disobedience it felt, *by that Spirit of  
Adoption and Grace*, by which *we are  
renewed and made like unto him*, and  
prepared by a Conformity to his Na-  
ture here, for the Enjoyment of his Pre-  
sence hereafter. These are surely such  
inestimable Benefits, such Instances of  
his Goodness and Condescension to us,  
that we must needs have very cold and  
frozen Hearts, if we are not affected  
with the highest Sense of Gratitude,  
when we consider for what Reasons, and  
in what Sense it is, that we are allowed  
to call God our Father.

But it is not by the Character of a  
Father only, but of a Father who re-  
sides in Heaven, that we are taught to  
offer up our Requests to God, by the  
Direction of our blessed Saviour: The  
Place of his Residence is pointed out to  
our View, to put us in mind of his in-  
finite

finite Perfections, and to shew us, that SERM.  
*as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, XVII.*  
*so are his Thoughts higher than our*   
*Thoughts, and his Ways than our Ways.*

There is scarce any Excellence or Perfection of this Nature, that will not force it self on our Notice, when we consider him in full Majesty, thus seated and enthroned in Heaven: Or rather when we consider him in the Imensity of his Nature, circumscribed by no Bounds or Limits, but filling the Heavens as well as the Earth, and providing for the Support of both. What an Idea may we conceive of the Greatness of that Being, *whom even the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens is not able to contain!* What an Idea of his Wisdom and Power must we have, when we consider him as present in all arts of his Creation, surveying at one View the most distant Places; and though *he is in his holy Temple, though his Throne is in Heaven, yet with his Eyes beholding, and with his Eyelids try-*  
*ing*

SERM. *ing the Children of Men!* And again, what  
 XVII. an Idea of his Goodness to us Men,  
 ~~~~~ who *though he hath his Dwelling so high,*  
yet humbleth himself to behold the things
that are in Heaven and Earth! As there-
 fore the Appellation or Name of Fa-
 ther may in some sort be understood
 (as was said before) to be a proper De-
 claration of our Gratitude to God, for
 the Mercies by him vouchsafed to us,
 so the Epithet of *heavenly*, or *which art*
in Heaven, is a very proper Introduction
 to that Worship and Adoration, which
 is paid to him in those Words which
 follow, and both together thus opened
 and explained, may furnish us with two
 useful Lessons.

One is, that both this and all our
 other Prayers, which we presume to
 offer up to God, should be offered with
 a religious Awe, suitable to the Great-
 ness and Majesty of God, and our own
 Meanness and Unworthiness to approach
 him. Thinkest thou, says God to the
 over-weening *Jew*, who trusted in his
 vain

vain Oblations, *thinkest thou that I will* SERM.
eat Bull's Flesh, and drink the Blood of XVII.
Goats? Offer unto God Thanksgiving. In

like manner might he say to the over-
 weening Christian, who relies on the
 Performance of this better Sacrifice,
 Thinkest thou that I am pleased with
 thy proud Submission, thy presumptu-
 ous Tribute of Praise and Thanksgiving,
 as a suitable Return, a just Equivalent,
 a full Requital of my Favours to thee?
Offer unto God an humble Spirit. Thus
 might our Father which is in Heaven ex-
 postulate with us poor Sinners upon
 Earth, if we presumed to lay a Stress
 upon Praise and Thanksgiving, the most
 disinterested of all Offerings we can
 make. Much less may we set a Value
 on our Prayers and Supplications, our
 Repentance for Sins, our Desire of For-
 giveness, or any thing else which im-
 plies that we are indigent and needy,
 distress'd and afflicted Beings. These
 things are all meant for our own Bene-
 fit and Advantage; nor can we ever
 assume

SERM. assume any Merit to our selves, because
XVII. we have been so wise and so true to our
own Interest, as to apply to God for
the Relief of a Want, the Removal of
an Evil, or the Attainment of some future
Blessing. In this Case therefore,
if we come before the Lord with *thou-*
sands of Prayers, and *with ten thousand*
Rivers of Tears, we may indeed through
his Mercy be profitable to our selves,
but to him we are unprofitable Ser-
vants. Nothing we can do, can either
promote or disturb, diminish or increase
his Happiness. It redounds not to his
Profit, that we are dutiful and obedi-
ent, nor to his Honour, that we ascribe
Glory to him: Nor is he otherwise
pleased with any Act of ours, than as it
is conformable to the Law of Nature
or Reason, or to some other Injuncti-
on, which for our Sakes he has prescri-
bed to us.

Since therefore it is neither Profit nor
Pleasure to the Almighty, that we pay
Worship and Adoration to him; since
it

it is wholly for our Good, that he re-SERM.
quires us to perform it, and since ours XVII.
will be the Reward for doing it; let us
consider, when we offer to make our
Prayers to him, in whose Presence we
are presuming to appear: Let us remem-
ber, *he is our Father*; a most endearing
Title; but a Title, which carries Reve-
rence and Respect; a Title, which should
deter us from making any disrespectful,
indecent or unpremeditated Request.
Let us consider also, that he is no earth-
ly Parent, that he is not subject to the
Prejudices and Errors of an ignorant
and partial Fondness, but sees us as
we are, whatever Artifice we may use,
whatever Colours and Disguises we may
wear: That as he is too *wise* not to see
our Guilt, so is he also *of purer Eyes*
than to behold it; and will have no Re-
gard to the Requests of those, who do
not labour to approve themselves his
genuine Offspring, by resembling him
in the Purity of his Nature. Let it be
remembred also, that though he, in
his

SERM. his Goodness, is pleased to admit us,
XVII. though far unworthy, to the Privileges
and Name of Sons, we are no more
than his Creatures still: The same Distance of Nature there is still between us: We are the Work of his Hands, as much inferior to him, nay infinitely more, than the most despicable Part of the brute or the inanimate Creation is inferior to the highest of those exalted Spirits, that continually *incompass the Throne of God*, whose Excellence it is, that they are able without ceasing, and whose Happiness it is, that they are admitted without Measure to enjoy the blessed Vision of their great Creator, and to be perpetually employ'd in the highest Offices of Devotion, and the highest Ecstasies of Love and Wonder. *Let the Potsherd therefore strive with the Potsherds of the Earth*: Let us vie with each other in those Acts of Virtue, which tend to raise and refine our Nature: But let us all, when we come into the Presence of God, bring with us the
most

most submissive Reverence: Let us re-
 member the Distance between *him* and *us*; and let us always esteem it a high
 Privilege and Honour, that we are al-
 lowed to approach the Throne of Grace,
 and offer up our Supplications there;
 that he has declared he is well pleased
 with our Praise and Thanksgiving, and
 that he will not reject our Prayers.

Secondly, Therefore, notwithstanding
 our Meanness, notwithstanding our
 Unworthiness to receive Favours from
 him, let us approach him with the
 Confidence of Sons, in full Assurance
 that our Prayers will be heard, and our
 Requests, if expedient, granted. What
Man is there of you, says our blessed Sa-
viour, who if his Son ask Bread, will he
give him a Stone? or if he ask a Fish, will
he give him a Serpent? There is some-
 thing in the very Name and Relation
 of Father, which implies a Proneness or
 Readiness to give; a Desire to admi-
 nister to the Wants of his Children,
 and to gratify them in all reasonable
 Requests;

SERM. Requests; and much more may we expect this from *our Father which is in Heaven*, than we can expect it from any earthly Parent; because one of the Reasons, why we call him Father, is the Experience of his Bounty to us: We have ever found him ready, unask'd and unthought of, to relieve us in all Difficulties and Wants. This therefore we may consider, with great Gratitude and Respect, as an Earnest of his future Favours, especially since he has been pleased to encourage us with a Promise, that *if we ask, we shall receive; if we seek, we shall find; if we knock, it shall be opened unto us.* But we may further observe from the Epithet of *Heavenly*, by which he is distinguished from our earthly Parents, that we may safely rely on his Wisdom to discern, and his Power to supply our Wants. An earthly Parent may perhaps be well acquainted with the real Needs and Necessities of his Child, but may want Power or Ability to supply them: Or again, he may be

be able to supply his Wants, but may SERM.
 be ignorant in what Manner it may be XVII.
 best to do it, that it may turn to the
 Child's Interest or Advantage. When
 he asketh Bread, he may ignorantly
 give him that, which may prove to *him*
 no better than a *Stone*; when he asketh
 a *Fish* (such ill Judges are we of the Is-
 sues and Events of Things) he may
 chance to give him that, which when
 he comes to use it, may prove to be
 as *baneful* as a *Serpent*: But this is not
 the Case of *our Father which is in Hea-*
ven, Who not only sees us in our pre-
 sent *Wants*, but likewise in all possible
Distresses: Who is perfectly acquainted
 with the Tendencies and Effects of all
 that we either do or suffer; and will not
 fail, if we submit to his Will and Plea-
 sure, and leave the Issues of things to
 his unerring Wisdom, so to order and
 dispose them to our Benefit and Advan-
 tage, that in the End we shall have Cause
 to admire his Wisdom, and to praise
 him for his Goodness to us; displayed

SERM. sometimes by *gratifying* our Desires, and
 XVII. sometimes by disappointing our Hopes,
 ~~~~~ by averting those Evils which we ignorantly asked, or by chastening and correcting us with such salutary Discipline, as, however irksome and afflicting it may be to us for the present, he sees to be most useful for us. And thus far we may rely on God's fatherly Goodness, when we make our Petitions to him.

But lastly, it must be observed, before we part with this Subject, that in all our Requests and Supplications to God, we must have a due Regard to the Good of other *Men*. We must not be so narrow and contracted in our Views, as to aim at nothing but our own private Benefit; but must enlarge our Requests with a truly Christian Charity to the Good of Mankind in general, who, as they have all one common Parent, one Creator and Preserver of the whole, may be presumed to love as Brethren, and whose Duty it is therefore to *promote* the Good of others, by  
 all



all Services and good Offices in their SERM.  
 Power, of which there can be none XVII.  
 greater, than that of labouring by our  
 Prayers to procure God's Blessing for  
 them. We can have no Pretence to  
 ask any thing of God, if we do not  
 truly and sincerely love him; and we  
 cannot pretend to love him truly and  
 sincerely, *if we do not love our Brother*  
*also.* And this is the Reason that the  
 Prayer now before us, is composed all  
 along in the plural Style, teaching us,  
 that whatever we think reasonable for  
 our selves, we should endeavour to pro-  
 cure likewise for our Brethren, who, as  
 they are derived from the same Original,  
 and were fashion'd by the same  
 Hand, in the same Form, and of the  
 same Matter with our selves, are as much  
 under the Care of his gracious Provi-  
 dence, and as much entitled to his Love,  
 as we are.

To sum up all : When we enter in-  
 to our Closets to pray (at which Times  
 this excellent Prayer of our Lord should

SERM. never surely, if possible, be omitted)

XVII. let us always endeavour to prepare our

~ Hearts for it, by reflecting on God's awful Majesty, and let this discourage us from presuming to approach him without a Sense of our Meanness and Unworthiness to ask, or receive any thing from so pure a Being: But at the same time, let us remember, that his Mercy is great, that he has born with our Frailties, and relieved our Necessities with the Kindness and Compassion of a Father; that he has admitted us to the Title and Privileges of Sons, and allowed us, through the Merits and Intercession of our Redeemer, *to come boldly to the Throne of Grace.* For these Mercies, and all others that have ever been received from him, let our Hearts be lifted up with Gratitude, and let them be filled with a Sense of his Excellencies and Perfections, which is the best Way of *ascribing Glory to him*; the best way to kindle such a Love to God, as will break out in the most diffusive Benevo-

Benevolence to Mankind; such a Love SERM.  
as will give us the best Claim we can XVII.  
have, to ask any thing at the Hands ~~~  
of God; and such a Love as will dis-  
pose us, above all things, by his Grace,  
to pray for others, with as much Zeal  
as for our selves. And this seems to be  
the Frame and Disposition of Mind,  
which we all ought to aim at, though  
we cannot always have it, when we  
direct our Prayers to Almighty God, in  
that short but comprehensive and affec-  
tionate Address, *Our Father which art in  
Heaven.*

*Now to God the Father, &c.*





A

# S E R M O N

On MATT. vi. 11.

*Hallowed be thy Name.*

SERM.  
XVIII.



W H E N, according to the Command of our blessed Saviour, we have directed our Prayer to the Throne of Grace by that short, but comprehensive and affectionate Address, *Our Father which art in Heaven*; the next thing to be considered is the Petition in my Text; the Meaning of which, though it ought to be understood, and it is to be hoped is, in some competent Degree, understood by all those who are accustomed to use it in their publick as well as private



vate Worship; yet, because it may be SERM.  
of use, even to those who understand XVIII  
it, to meditate sometimes more particu-  
larly upon the Sense of it, that they  
may be able to recover it with the great-  
er Readiness and Ease, when they have  
Occasion to make use of it in their Pray-  
ers, I shall at this Time take upon me  
to explain.

And First, by God's *Name*, which  
we here pray may be *hallowed*, we are  
to understand his most glorious Majesty;  
the Person, if I may so speak, of our  
Father which is in Heaven, as distin-  
guished from all other Beings. In this Sense  
it is used in many Texts of Scripture,  
too tedious to be here inserted. When  
*Solomon* called the new Temple which  
he had built, *a House built to the Name*  
*of the Lord*, it was never understood,  
that this Temple was erected in Honour  
of the Word *Jehovah*, or of any other  
Title or Appellation whatsoever, by  
which the God of *Israel* was adored;  
but that it was raised for his Honour,

SERM. and dedicated to his Service, and de-  
 XVIII. signed as a Place of Worship for him.  
 Again, when God declared, as it ap-  
 pears he did, that in this Temple he  
 would *place his Name*, it was never un-  
 derstood, that the Word *Jehovah* was  
 either literally inscribed upon the Tem-  
 ple it self, or deposited and preserved  
 within it, but that he chose this Place,  
 in some Sense or other, to be the Seat  
 of his immediate Residence. In like  
 manner, when we are taught, as we of-  
 ten are in Scripture, *to call upon the*  
*Name of the Lord*, it is not meant that  
 we ought to worship him by any Name  
 in particular, but only that in general  
 we should call upon him, and make  
 our Prayers and Supplications to him.  
*To blaspheme the Name of God*, as the  
 Gentiles did, taking Offence at the ill  
 Lives of Christians, can signify no more,  
 than in a strict Sense to speak, and in  
 a loose Sense to think, or conceive in  
 our Minds any Notion unworthy of  
 him. On the other hand, *to bless*, to  
*love,*

love, to praise, to magnify, to sing Prai- SERM.  
ses to God's holy Name, have no other XVIII.  
Sense, in the Language of holy Writ,  
than to ascribe all Glory to him: The  
Word *Name* being used for the Thing  
signified by the Name; for the Person,  
or the Deity, the Majesty of God, in-  
cluding those Excellencies and Perfecti-  
ons of his, by which he is distinguished  
from all other Beings.

This then being settled, the next  
thing to be considered, is the Meaning  
of the Word *Hallowed* in my Text. To  
*hallow* or sanctify can have no other  
Sense, than either to consecrate or make  
holy any Person or Thing that was not  
in its own Nature holy; or else to  
esteem, and treat as holy, any Person  
or Thing that is so. In the first of  
these Senses, it is easy to see, that it  
cannot be understood in my Text: It  
being impossible to make God, who is  
the Person there spoken of, to be in a-  
ny Respect holier than he is. The  
peculiar Excellencies and Perfections of  
his

SERM. his Nature, the incommunicable Attributes, by which he is distinguished and separated from all other Beings, is the Fountain of that Holiness, which is ascribed to him, and *from him* derived to others: Nor is *any* thing called Holy in a Scripture Sense, but as it bears some Relation to him. Thus the *Jews* of old, and we Christians now, are said to be a *holy* People to the Lord. And thus among Christians, some Persons are esteemed, or *should* be esteemed, as I shall shew hereafter, to have a greater Share of Sanctity than others; inasmuch as in many Cases they represent his Person, and act in his Name and Stead. Thus also some Places and Times are sacred, being dedicated to his Use and Service; every thing being supposed to be more or less holy, as it is more or less distinguished from things of the same Nature, by the Relation which it bears to God. God therefore being the Fountain of that relative Holiness, which we ascribe to all other Beings,



ings; and Holiness in *Him*, being deri-<sup>SERM.</sup>  
ved from none, but founded in the<sup>XVIII.</sup>

Greatness and Excellence of his Nature, <sup>~~~~~</sup>  
in which in the strictest Sense is infinite;  
it is impossible, as I said, by any Act  
of ours, for *Him* to be made holier than  
he is. To *hallow* therefore in the  
Words before us, must be understood  
in the other Sense, as it signifies to  
esteem, and treat as holy, any Person  
or Thing that *is* so. To do this with  
respect to God, is to think of him, as  
of a Being endued with all possible Per-  
fections: And that too, in such an emi-  
nent and peculiar Manner, that they ne-  
ver were or can be communicated to  
any Creature of the most excellent and  
exalted Nature. We must believe, that  
the Ideas we are able to form of the  
moral Beauties and Attributes of God,  
as they are no better than Copies of  
those Virtues and Graces which we dis-  
cover in our own finite Nature, are in-  
finitely short of those divine Perfections,  
as they exist and shine forth in *Him*.

We

SERM. XVIII. We must therefore strive to exalt our Thoughts to the highest Images we can possibly frame; and confess, when we have done this, that we are as far from knowing him, as far from comprehending his mysterious Nature, as we were when we set out at first. Yet still we must go on, and esteem it our highest Privilege that we are able, at least in some competent *Degree*, to contemplate his glorious Being; that we are not, like the brute or inanimate Creation, quite ignorant of the Hand that formed us, but can consider the *Heavens as the Work of his Hands, the Moon and the Stars as what he ordained*; that the *invisible Things of him* are, in some measure, seen and cleared up by the things about us; that we can trace his Wisdom, his Goodness and his Power from their various and great Effects; from the Order of the World; from the Beauties of Nature; from the wonderful Events and Revolutions of things, which are continually rising and appearing

ing to our View, and putting us in SERM.  
mind, if it were possible to forget it, XVIII.  
that it was *He* who contrived and form-  
ed the whole, and that it is *He* who  
still rules and governs it.

From this general Notion of *hallow-*  
*ing* the Name of God, by conceiving in  
our Minds the most sublime Ideas of  
his most excellent and perfect Being, and  
by affecting our Hearts with the most  
awful Sense of Respect and Veneration  
for him, which is what seems to be  
meant by that Precept of *St. Peter*, *to*  
*sanctify the Lord God in our Hearts*, we  
shall naturally be led to the Exercise of  
those Acts, which are expressive of this  
inward Reverence. As it is not enough  
to have right Notions and Apprehensi-  
ons of the Nature and Attributes of  
God, unless they are accompanied with  
such Affections of Mind, as those No-  
tions ought properly to produce, so  
neither is it enough to have such Affec-  
tions of Mind, if they are not testified  
by some outward Act. Not that there  
is

SERM. is need, by any Act of ours, or by any  
 XVIII. humble Posture of the Body, to make  
 known unto God, who is the great  
 Searcher of Hearts, in what Manner we  
 are affected to him. But it is the Du-  
 ty of us Christians, for the Good of  
 others, by the positive Command of  
 our blessed Lord himself, so far as we  
 can escape the Guilt of Hypocrisy and  
 vain Glory, to make our Virtues as  
 conspicuous as we can: Or in his own  
 Words, *to make our Light so to shine be-  
 fore Men, that they seeing our good Works,  
 may glorify our Father which is in Hea-  
 ven.* Besides this, it is the Duty, as  
 well as Happiness of Man, to exercise  
 as many Acts of Reverence as he can,  
 to a Being of so much Majesty as God;  
 Nor indeed can such a Reverence, as I  
 have here supposed, subsist in the Mind  
 without it. We find our selves by Ex-  
 perience to be so frail and feeble, so im-  
 mersed in Sense, and so easily withdrawn  
 from all Objects of a spiritual Nature,  
 that there is need of all the Arts and  
 Advan-



Advantages we can use, to keep a Sense SERM.  
of God's Majesty in our Hearts. Eve- XVIII.

ry Act of Worship tends to strengthen  
and confirm such a pious and religious  
Spirit, and every Omission of such Act  
impairs it: A long Continuance in such  
Omissions is an Evidence that the  
Principle is weak, and utterly to abstain  
from all Acts of Worship, is a plain  
Proof that it is utterly extinct. It is  
for this Reason, that the wise Author  
of our Nature has separated or set apart  
a certain Portion of our Time, for the  
Exercise of these spiritual Acts; and  
since he has been so good and so mode-  
rate in his Demands, as to require but  
one Day in Seven, it is but reasonable,  
that of our selves we should make a  
Free-will-Offering of some lesser Portion  
of the other Six: The frequent Re-  
petition of these solemn Acts being  
not only a Duty which we owe to  
God, but a Means to enable us to per-  
form that Duty with the greater Ease  
and Pleasure to our selves; in like man-  
ner,

SERM. *ner*, as the Practice of any manual Art  
XVIII. does enable the Practitioner, as often as  
he repeats it, to perform it with more  
Readiness and Ease, till at last he arrives  
at such a Mastery in his Art, as to do  
it with Delight and Pleasure. Such is  
the Effect, which in the Nature of  
things we might reasonably expect from  
the regular Use of such solemn and re-  
ligious Acts. But we are further assu-  
red by the Scripture it self, that if in  
this Manner *we draw near unto God*,  
we may expect him *to draw near* unto  
us: That in return for our poor and  
imperfect Services, he will endue us  
with such Measures of supernatural  
Grace, as will enable us to do it bet-  
ter for the future; and he that is not  
sensible of this Progress of the Soul  
from Virtue to Virtue, from Grace to  
Grace, under the Influence and Aid of  
God's holy Spirit, has lost one of the  
greatest and most divine Enjoyments,  
that in this dark, imperfect and discon-  
solate State the Soul of Man is capable  
of receiving. Some

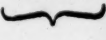
Some Acts of Worship, to be religiously performed at regular and stated Periods, are therefore not only the genuine Effects, but the best Preservatives of that religious Awe, which we ought to have for the Majesty of God. But such Acts as these cannot well be performed, at least not at all Times with equal Profit, without the Help of some outward Sign. We may indeed sometimes, with infinite Delight, set our Thoughts a ranging in those boundless Fields of Contemplation on the Attributes of God, till they are lost and swallowed up in Wonder. And such an Act as this, when it is a voluntary Act, performed with a fixt and deliberate Design to admire and adore the Deity, is, doubtless, in his Sight as much an Act of Worship, as when we offer up *the Sacrifice of our Lips*. But it is not every one that has this Strength of Mind. Many have no Notion of any Act of Worship, so pure, so abstracted and refined; nor can even those who

SERM. *have*, be so sure of praising God in  
 XVIII. an acceptable and proper Manner, when  
 { they are left to the Direction of their  
 own sudden Thoughts, as they are by  
 the Help of a set Form of Words, de-  
 sign'd to contain and suggest to their  
 Minds proper Matter for their Praise  
 and Worship.

As to publick Prayer, which 'is a  
 Kind of Worship, from which nothing  
 but Necessity can excuse us; there could  
 be *nothing* of this Kind, without publick  
 Forms, to offer up our Requests jointly  
 to God. Words there must be, and  
 a set Form of Words, as for many other  
 Reasons, so particularly for this, that  
 we may avoid all rash and inconfide-  
 rate Expressions, which an unpremedi-  
 tated Kind of Worship might pro-  
 duce.

And *as* for these Reasons, and some  
 others that might be named, it is very  
 fit and proper, and even necessary in  
 common Cases, to make use of a set  
 Form of Prayer, *so* the Use of that Form  
 should



should be accompanied with such Po-SERM.  
stures as are most proper to express Re-XVIII.  
verence and Respect. In this Nation,   
the highest Instances of Humility and  
Submission are expressed by the Act of  
Kneeling; which is therefore the pro-  
per Posture to be used among *us*, in the  
Exercise of these pious Acts. It is true,  
that this Circumstance is not necessary  
to be observed at all Times, and in all  
Cases that may happen. A Labourer  
at his Work, a Student in his Chair, a  
Traveller on the Road, a sick Man in  
his Bed, and in general, whatever State  
or Posture we are in, in our Morning  
Studies, in our Evening Walks, in our  
Midnight Vigils, we may doubtless  
perform many Acts of Piety very ac-  
ceptably to Almighty God; the Nature  
of our Condition, the Business we are  
about, or the sudden Turn of our  
Thoughts to a religious Subject, not al-  
lowing us Time or Place or Opportu-  
nity to perform it in any other Man-  
ner. But the Case is not so, at those

SERM. stated Seasons, which we constantly ob-  
XVIII. serve, and prescribe to our selves, for  
the Exercise of our daily Worship;  
which being more deliberate and solemn  
Acts, to be performed in private, at  
convenient Times, when we are at Li-  
berty to choose our Posture, we ought  
always to perform upon our Knees; be-  
cause that is the Posture, which is used  
among *us*, when we come into the  
Presence of an earthly Prince, to testify  
our Duty to him. Now it is a well-  
known Rule in God's dealing with us,  
that he expects us to act in all Instan-  
ces of Duty, according to those Noti-  
ons and Apprehensions of things, which  
we our selves are capable of entertain-  
ing. Whatever he requires, he re-  
quires at our Hands, as agreeable to  
our own Conceptions, though for ought  
we know, in many Cases, this may  
happen to be as different from his, as  
Darkness is from Light, or as our own  
frail and imperfect Being is different  
from his glorious Majesty.

Since

Since therefore some Tokens of bo-SERM.  
dily Respect, and among *us* that of XVIII.  
Kneeling in particular, is esteemed a ~  
proper Sign of our inward Reverence,  
it ought surely to be performed to the  
great Author of our Being, who is en-  
titled to the best Tokens of our Respect.  
It is true, he does not need such Assu-  
rances as this, nor any other Evidence  
of our Duty: But if this were any Rea-  
son against bodily Worship, it would  
be a Reason against all Worship in ge-  
neral, against the Use of Words as well  
as other Signs, which nevertheless I  
have proved necessary to be used.

To this may be added, that this Ac-  
tion of Kneeling thus constantly kept  
up, and religiously observed in our pri-  
vate as well as publick Prayers, must  
needs tend to preserve that Sense of  
God's Majesty, which is the Fountain of  
religious Worship. The Preparation we  
make for these Acts of Duty, and the so-  
lemn Manner in which they are perform-  
ed, serve to keep up the Distinction,

SERM. which is necessary to be made, between  
 XVIII. Actions profane and sacred. Without  
 this, the Performance of religious Wor-  
 ship would in a little while become as  
 indifferent to us, as the most ordinary  
 and common Action of our Lives; the  
 Sense of God's Majesty would insensi-  
 bly decline, till at last we should come  
 to be so unconcern'd about it, as to lay  
 aside even the Times of performing this  
 Duty, and so at last lose the whole Ha-  
 bit of Devotion. Whereas by this Me-  
 thod of falling down on our Knees,  
 whenever we perform any Act of Wor-  
 ship, the Solemnity of such Acts is ef-  
 fectually preserved, an awful Sense of  
 God's Majesty is impressed upon our  
 Hearts, and we can scarce offer up our  
 Requests to God, without a due Seri-  
 ousness and Composure of Mind, with-  
 out such an humble and submissive Re-  
 verence as that Posture is intended to  
 express.

To hallow or sanctify the Name of  
 God, is therefore, not only to conceive  
 in



in our Minds a due Reverence and SERM.  
Veneration for him, but also to declare XVII.  
and express that Reverence by proper   
Acts of Religious Worship. But be-  
sides these Offerings of Praise and Glory  
more immediately directed to him, there  
is also another Way to express this Re-  
verence, by the Regard we pay to those  
Persons or Things, which are dedicated  
to his immediate Service. Among  
these may be reckoned, first, those Words  
or Sounds, which are used in any Lan-  
guage as the Name of God, and are  
thereby so peculiarly appropriated to  
him, that it is unlawful even to *men-*  
*tion* them upon *slight* Occasions, or to  
apply them to any other Being; the  
former of which tends to lessen that  
Reverence, which we should bear to  
the Name of God; and the latter to  
destroy that necessary Distinction, which  
should always be preserved and kept up  
in our Minds, between God and all  
other Beings.

SERM. XVIII. Another Instance of this Kind, are those Times and Places, which are separated or set apart by God's own Appointment, or else by an Authority derived from him, to his own proper Use and Service. Of this Kind is his Sabbath, which if it were duly observed and kept with as much Reverence as it ought, would have an Influence on the whole following Week, and tend to keep up at all Times and Places, that awful Regard for the Majesty of God, in which the Life of all Piety consists. Of the same Kind is this Place, in which we are met together, and all other Places so consecrated and ordained for the Performance of religious Worship. These are always to be considered as appropriated to God, and to be treated therefore with a peculiar Respect. Far from this Place should be all worldly Business, all wanton Thoughts and impure Desires, all rude, indecent, and disrespectful Gestures, and all vain and unnecessary Discourse.

Our

Our Thoughts should be wholly bent SERM.  
and fixt on him, who is the great Ob- XVIII.  
ject of our Praise and Worship: And  
all the Powers of our Souls should be  
summoned and employed in performing  
this Duty to him. If this were the  
Case of all, who come together to these  
Places of religious Worship; if their Of-  
ferings were made with joint Force and  
Energy, what Blessings might we not  
expect? Our Prayers would ascend, *like*  
*an armed Host*, and as our Saviour terms  
it, take Heaven by *Storm*.

To the Performance of this Duty, and  
all others that can be named, nothing  
can be expected more effectually to con-  
duce, than the reading of the holy Scrip-  
tures, which are another Instance of  
Things which deserve our Reverence,  
from the Relation which they bear to  
God. I have not Room at this Time  
to expatiate or launch out upon the  
Excellence of these holy Writings. Be  
it sufficient to observe, that they were  
*written by holy Men* under the Influence  
of

SERM. of God's holy Spirit; that they con-  
 XVIII. tain the most perfect Rule both of  
 Faith and Manners, teaching whatever  
 we are required to believe or do for the  
 Attainment of everlasting Happiness:  
 And therefore that the Knowledge to  
 be gathered from them, whatever we  
 may think now, will be found hereaf-  
 ter to be the best and most useful  
 Knowledge.

In these Writings are ordained ano-  
 ther Sort of things, to be treated with a  
 peculiar Reverence. I mean the Sacra-  
 ments, which were instituted by Christ  
 himself, *as a means* to confer Grace  
 upon the Persons who receive them,  
*and a Pledge to assure* them of it. These,  
 as they were thus instituted and ordain-  
 ed by Christ, and are besides the most  
 solemn and religious Acts, by which we  
 can have any Intercourse with God,  
 should be treated with proper Decency  
 and Respect: That of Baptism, by con-  
 sidering it as the Badge of our Profes-  
 sion, as the Seal of that Covenant be-  
 tween



tween God and us, by which we are SERM.  
entitled, through the Merits of our Re- XVIII.  
deemer, *to the Privileges and Rights of*  
*Sons*: And that of the Lord's Supper,  
by remembring with Gratitude the Be-  
nefits thus purchased for us; by fre-  
quenting it constantly, receiving it re-  
verently, and by keeping those Vows  
and Resolutions of Amendment, which  
we are required at those Times to  
make.

To these, in the last Place, we may  
add the Persons of those who are ap-  
pointed to administer these holy Sacra-  
ments, to interpret God's Word, and  
dispense his Grace by such Offices as  
the Church directs: Not in such a ge-  
neral and unlimited Sense, that the Sal-  
vation of Men's Souls can any way de-  
pend on their absolute Will and Plea-  
sure, but as the Means or Instruments,  
which as often as they can be had, it  
has pleased God to appoint, for the  
regular Conveyance of these Blessings  
to their Christian Brethren. Now the  
Persons

SERM. Persons of these Men should therefore  
XVII. be esteemed holy, and a proper Respect  
is therefore to be paid to them, because they are separated and set apart, however unworthy, to the sole Use and Service of God. This is the strict and proper Sense, in which every thing is accounted holy: Nor is it any Bar to this Holiness of theirs, that their Lives are un sanctified and unclean. A Vessel that has been dedicated to the Service of God, though defiled and polluted by sacrilegious Hands, is nevertheless a holy Vessel to the Lord. And the Reason is plain, because the Sanctity or Holiness, that is ascribed to all Beings, except God, is not a natural and inherent, but a derivative Holiness: It does not arise from any Purity of Nature, but merely from the Relation which that Being bears to him, *who is perfect Holiness*. There is therefore a certain Decency of Behaviour to be observed to all those, who are employed in this important Trust, though not  
for

for their own Sake, but God's: And SERM.  
ill does it become those, who have a XVIII.  
Regard to God's Glory, to treat with  
Scorn, as too many do, an Order of  
God's own appointing, and to make  
that the Object of Contempt and De-  
rision, which is a Title of the highest  
Honour and Respect.

Upon the whole then, as often as  
these Words are used, we are first to  
understand them as an Act of Praise;  
as a dutiful Acknowledgment, that God  
ought to be adored and glorified by all  
his Creatures; that *his Name is worthy  
to be praised and had in Honour*, and  
that it is the Duty of all those, who  
are capable of performing it, to ascribe  
to him all Glory and Worship. Se-  
condly, It is a Petition or Request to  
God, that we and all others may be  
enabled to perform it in such a Man-  
ner as will be acceptable to him: that  
we may preserve in our Minds an ha-  
bitual Sense of his infinite and most  
adorable Perfections; that this Sense  
may

SERM. may be expressed by proper Acts of  
 XVIII. Worship, particularly by Meditation  
 and Prayer, which Prayer should be  
 conceived in a set Form of Words, and  
 delivered in the most humble Posture:  
 That he may be pleased to preserve us  
 in this profligate Age, from that Spirit  
 of Profaneness which is gone out among  
 us, destroying all Distinctions between  
 sacred and profane, and tempting us to  
 treat every thing that is dedicated to  
*him*, in the most irreverent and contu-  
 melious Manner: Particularly that he  
 may enable us by the Assistance of his  
 Grace, to preserve an awful Regard to  
 his holy Name, how much soever we  
 hear it vilified and blasphemed: To  
 his Sabbath, however it is now prosti-  
 tuted and profaned by the Manage-  
 ment of our secular Concerns, or by  
 the no more innocent, though less cen-  
 sured Custom of employing it in idle  
 and impertinent Visits, and thereby spen-  
 ding it in vain and unprofitable, if not  
 wicked and uncharitable Discourse: To  
 his



*Hallowed be thy Name.*

191

his Temple, the Place where he has SERM.  
set his Name, however it is unhallow- XVIII.  
ed and defiled by the wilful Inattention  
and Indevotion of some, who appear to  
come thither with very different Views  
from the End and Design for which it  
was erected, and devoted to the Name  
of God: To the Word of God, however  
rudely handled by ludicrous and licentious  
Pens: To the Sacraments ordained by  
Christ himself, however deserted and dis-  
used by some, and however profaned  
by others: And to the Persons of his  
Ministers, appointed by his Word, to  
act in his Name and Stead, however  
unworthy of that honourable Distinction,  
however contemned, traduced and scor-  
ned by inconsiderate and uncharitable  
Men. In one Word, it is a Petition,  
that we may all be endued with such a  
competent Measure of God's special  
Grace, that we may live like Men who  
have a constant Sense of a superior Be-  
ing presiding over them, who deserves  
all

SERM. all the Tenders of Duty we can make,  
XVIII. and whom therefore let us worship by  
the Reverence of our Hearts, by the  
Acknowledgments of our Lips, and a-  
bove all by the Obedience and Purity  
of our Lives, both now and for ever-  
more.

*Now to God, &c.*





A

# S E R M O N

On M A T T. vi. 10.

*Thy Kingdom come.*



HIS short Petition, and the SERM.  
 next which follows, *that the* XIX.  
*Will of God may be done on* }  
*Earth, in like Manner as it is*  
*done in Heaven,* are designed to carry on  
 that Act of Worship, which was begun  
 in the foregoing Words; where, as soon  
 as we have ascribed all Praise and Glory  
 to our Father *which is in Heaven,* we  
 proceed to pray, that that Glory may  
 be display'd by the Coming of his  
 Kingdom, and by the Obedience of  
 all

V O L. II.

O

SERM. all rational or intelligent Creatures, those  
XIX. on Earth as well as those in Heaven.

— The first of these, namely the Coming of his Kingdom, will at this Time be the Subject of my Discourse; in which I shall enquire

I. What is meant by the Word *Kingdom*, and

II. What is meant by it's Coming. After which I shall conclude with some practical Observations, which my Subject seems naturally to suggest.

I. The Kingdom of God, in the Language of Holy Writ, is understood in very different Senses. Sometimes it is spoken of that absolute Dominion, which is exercised by God over the Works of his Hands, as the great Author and Sovereign of the whole; agreeable to which are those Words of the Psalmist, *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in Heaven; his Kingdom ruleth over all*. Sometimes it is taken in a more limited Sense, as importing his particular Providence over Men, distinguish-  
ed



ed from the rest of their Fellow-Crea-SERM.  
tures upon Earth, by the Principle of XIX.  
Reason, which he has given them: In  
which Sense it is said by the same ho-  
ly Writer, *The Kingdom is the Lord's, and  
he is the Governor among the People.*  
But in neither of these Senses, however  
common in holy Writ, is the Word  
*Kingdom* to be understood in my Text.  
For in both these Senses it is already  
come, and has been from the Creation  
of the World. *God is our King of old,*  
*says David; the Lord is King for ever and*  
*ever.* There never was a Time when  
his Power was less absolute, nor can it  
ever be more absolute than it is, nor  
can we ever *pray* that *this Kingdom*  
of his may come, in any other Sense,  
than to testify our Submission to his  
sovereign Will and Pleasure; to declare,  
that we are content with his Dispen-  
sations to us, well satisfied with the Rea-  
sonableness and Equity of his Proceed-  
ings, and willing to confess, with the  
most thankful Hearts, *that the Sceptre of*  
O 2 *his*

SERM. *his Kingdom is a right Sceptre.* This indeed it is our Duty to do; but this is

XIX. *not* what is meant in my Text; for this would confound it with the following Petition: Whereas in such a short and comprehensive Form, it cannot be supposed, that the same thing should be asked twice, or made the Subject of any two Petitions.

By the Kingdom of God, in the Words now to be considered, we are therefore to understand that spiritual Kingdom, which is nowhere mentioned as actually subsisting, till the Times of the Gospel Covenant, but is often mentioned there under various Names, and considered in very different Views; sometimes it is called *the Kingdom of Heaven*, sometimes *the Kingdom of God*, and sometimes *the Kingdom of Christ*; sometimes it is considered *as a State of Grace*, and sometimes *as a State of Glory*; under all which Titles, and in both which Views, there is no more than one thing intended, namely that spiritual and  
invisible

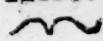
invisible Kingdom of the Messiah, which SERM.  
was foretold by the Prophets, expected XIX.  
by the *Jews*, and is believed by us ~  
Christians to have actually commenced  
at the Time of our blessed Lord's As-  
cension; though it is not yet become  
perfect and complete, nor shall be till  
the End of all things, when *Christ shall*  
*have delivered up the Kingdom to God*  
*even the Father, that God may be all in*  
*all.* In the mean time he has an ab-  
solute and unlimited Dominion over all  
things both in Heaven and Earth, *God*  
*having highly exalted him, and given him*  
*a Name above every Name, that at the*  
*Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of*  
*things in Heaven, and things in Earth,*  
*and things under the Earth, and that eve-*  
*ry Tongue should confess that Jesus Christ*  
*is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.*  
In this infinitely glorious and exalted  
State, he is represented as *sitting at the*  
*right Hand of God, far above all Princi-*  
*pality and Power, and Might and Domi-*  
*nion, and every Name that is named, not*  
O 3 only

SERM. *only in this World, but also in that which*  
 XIX. *is to come.* From hence too he is repre-

— sented, as dispensing those Favours, and pouring down those Gifts and Graces of his holy Spirit, which are necessary for his Kingdom upon Earth; giving Laws to those who submit to his Jurisdiction, enforcing those Laws by Rewards and Punishments, and protecting his Subjects from the Invasion of their Enemies, by the Influence of his holy Spirit. These are the several Acts of Christ's regal Office, which it may be worth while more particularly to consider, that we may from thence form a Judgment of the Nature of that Kingdom, which is so often made the Subject of our Prayers.

I. The first Act of Royalty which is exercised by Christ, is the giving or prescribing Laws. As God has made Laws for Mankind in general, by implanting in our Nature such a Sense of Good and Evil, as may enable us in some sort to understand his Will, and



to regulate our Actions by it; so has SERM.  
Christ, by refining on this ancient Law, XIX.  
by enforcing its Precepts, by clearing   
up its Doubts, by adding what was  
wanting to make it perfect and complete,  
composed a new Set of Laws for the  
Government of his Kingdom, which,  
though not inconsistent with the Law  
of Nature or Reason, do nevertheless  
subsist by a distinct Authority, and are  
received as Laws by the Subjects of his  
Kingdom, in Obedience to their Lord's  
Commands. These Laws are reducible  
to two general Heads, that is to say,  
Repentance and Faith. The latter of  
which, in the Christian Sense, was ne-  
ver made a Law, or required a Duty,  
till the Coming of our Saviour Christ;  
and the former, considered *as a Death un-*  
*to Sin, and a new Birth to a Life of Righte-*  
*ousness*, is a Notion unknown to all Reli-  
gions, except the Christian, from which  
alone it derives its Being. Since there-  
fore no Person can have a Right to im-  
pose Laws, or to exact any Obedience

SERM. from others, but by virtue of some Authority over them; and since the Right of Kings to impose Laws upon their Subjects (though not without their own Consent) is the highest Notion of such Authority upon Earth; the prescribing these Laws, and exacting this Obedience from all Persons, to whom the Gospel is preached, may be considered as one Act of Christ's Regal Office, extending indeed to all People in the World, but peculiarly exercised over those, who are admitted to a nearer Interest in this Kingdom of Grace.

II. But *Secondly*, Because it is of little Use to enact wholesome Laws, unless they are enforced by proper Sanctions, unless suitable Rewards are annexed to the Observance, and Penalties to the Violation of them; and because this also is the Office of a King, to see that they are executed in the most effectual Manner to promote the true Interest of his People; another Instance therefore of Christ's regal Power, is the executing

cuting these Laws, and enforcing our SERM.  
Obedience by the Motives of Rewards XIX.  
and Punishments. The former of which  
are set forth in the Gospel in such  
amiable and inviting Colours, and the  
latter denounced with so much Terror  
to the Disobedient, that if we do not  
comply with the Terms proposed to us,  
we shall be utterly without Excuse. Our  
Hopes and Fears are so thoroughly alarm'd,  
by all that can be expected to have an  
Influence upon either, that whenever  
we see Men who profess themselves  
Christians, live dissolute Lives, and dis-  
cover by their Actions, that these Mo-  
tives have no Influence upon their  
Hearts, there is great Reason to suspect  
their Faith: it being scarce possible that  
those, who are in Truth persuaded, that  
the Fruits of Righteousness are so great  
and glorious, and the Wages of Sin so  
exceeding grievous, as in the Gospel  
they are described to be, should, not-  
withstanding this, make it evidently  
appear, that they have no Regard for  
either.

SERM. either. But whatever we may think, or  
 XIX. however we may act, God's Laws will  
 ~~~~~ be executed at last. If he is not glorified by our Obedience here, he will be by our Punishment hereafter. His Justice will be displayed, and his Honour vindicated in the Presence of Men and Angels. That Patience and Forbearance, which the Wicked now abuse, shall be kindled into Wrath and Vengeance; and the Sufferings of the Righteous, *which endure but for a Moment, shall work for them a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.*

Now the Person, who is to execute this high Commission of dispensing Rewards and Punishments, is, according to the Scriptures, Christ *our Lord*, to whom it is there said, *all Judgment is committed, and all Power both in Heaven and Earth*; and whose final Coming to judge the World, is accordingly described with the highest Marks of Royalty, with some Allusion to the Magnificence of earthly Princes, when they sit in
 Judgment,

Judgment, or appear among their Sub-SERM.jects to execute the highest Offices of XIX. State. This therefore is the second Branch of Christ's regal Office, by which he is empowered *to judge among the People*, to call his Subjects to account for their Behaviour, and to reward them according to their Deserts. But

III. Because this Life is a State of Trial and Probation, and the Day of Judgment is put off, till we have finished our Course, and are all met together on the other Side of the Grave; and because in the mean time we have need of great Succours against the Assaults of our spiritual Enemies, another Instance of Christ's Regal Power consists in the Defence and Protection of his Subjects, in all Difficulties and Dangers that may arise. The End of all Government is the People's Good, who *therefore* submit to the Authority of a King, because by him they are preserved from Danger: And the more vigilant and active, the more able their Prince

SERM. Prince is to avenge their Quarrels, to
 XIX. subdue their Enemies, to guard them
 against Injuries and Assaults from others,
 the more secure is he always of their
 Duty and Respect. Accordingly if we
 look back into the Registers of Time, and
 search the Histories of Kings and King-
 doms, we shall find that those Princes
 have been most honour'd and esteemed,
 who have either ruled their Subjects in
 Peace and Safety, or else have turned
 their Arms upon the Enemies of their
 Country, and signalized their Names in
 After-Ages by a long Series of Victories
 and Triumphs. Had the Kingdom of
 the Messiah been a Kingdom of this
 World, as it was expected by the *Jews*
 to be, none had been more able to wage
 War successfully, and to have enlarged
his Dominion from one Sea to the other, and
from the Flood unto the World's End. He
 that could have commanded more Le-
 gions of Angels, than the *Romans* had
 of Soldiers to carry on their Conquests,
 could literally have fulfilled the Predic-
 tions

tions of the Prophets, *bruising his Enemies with a Rod of Iron, and breaking them in Pieces like a Potter's Vessel.* But SERM. XIX.

But the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal: We wrestle not, says the Apostle, against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places.

These are the Enemies we have to deal with. The Aids and Succours which our Lord affords us, are adapted therefore to the Ways and Methods, by which their Hostilities are carried on against us. By them we are assaulted with Guile and Treachery; and as nothing but Wisdom is an Overmatch for Cunning, by him we are supported, and enabled to subdue them, by that Wisdom which cometh from above.

The inward Workings of our Thoughts and Passions, are the Engines which they turn to our Destruction. The inward Strivings of his saving Grace, are the Arms which he employs against them.

SERM. them. If these are seconded by our
 XIX. own Endeavours, the Victory is ours;

we are as sure of Conquest, as we are that God's Power is too great to be resisted; and that nothing can hurt us, while he guards and watches over us, and with his *favourable Kindness defends us, as with a Shield.* This therefore is the last Instance of Christ's Regal Power, consisting in the Defence and Protection of his Subjects from the *Wiles of their ghostly Enemy*; enduing them with Wisdom, and Strength, and Patience, and whatever other Virtues and Graces may be found necessary to support them in so sharp a Conflict; by adapting his Help to their several Exigencies; by cherishing their Virtue; by mortifying their Lusts; and, in general, by conducting them in Peace and Safety through the Waves of this troublesome World, *till they arrive at the Haven where they would be.*

Thus much, I think, may be sufficient to explain what is meant by the Word *Kingdom* in my Text.

II. I proceed therefore *Secondly*, in put-SERM.
suance of my Design, to explain what XIX.
is meant by its Coming. And now it
may be asked, if the Nature of Christ's
Kingdom be such as I have here de-
scribed it, In what Sense it can be
made the Subject of our Prayers? Did
not Christ enter on his Regal Office
as soon as he ascended into Heaven?
Was not all Power then given him both
in Heaven and Earth? Has he not al-
ready, by virtue of that Power, enact-
ed Laws, required Obedience, and ap-
pointed Rewards and Punishments?
Does he not already protect his Sub-
jects? Has he not promised that he will
continue so to do, and *be with them al-*
ways unto the End of the World? How
is it then that we are still taught to
pray, that this *Kingdom of his may*
come?

In Answer to these Questions, it will
soon be understood, when I come to
my *Second* General Head, in what Sense
it is that we pray for this Kingdom,
though

SERM. them. If these are seconded by our
 XIX. own Endeavours, the Victory is ours;
 we are as sure of Conquest, as we are
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Wiles of their ghostly Enemy; enduing
 them with Wisdom, and Strength, and
 Patience, and whatever other Virtues
 and Graces may be found necessary to
 support them in so sharp a Conflict;
 by adapting his Help to their several
 Exigencies; by cherishing their Virtue;
 by mortifying their Lusts; and, in ge-
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II. I proceed therefore *Secondly*, in pursuance of my Design, to explain what is meant by its Coming. And now it may be asked, if the Nature of Christ's Kingdom be such as I have here described it, In what Sense it can be made the Subject of our Prayers? Did not Christ enter on his Regal Office as soon as he ascended into Heaven? Was not all Power then given him both in Heaven and Earth? Has he not already, by virtue of that Power, enacted Laws, required Obedience, and appointed Rewards and Punishments? Does he not already protect his Subjects? Has he not promised that he will continue so to do, and *be with them always unto the End of the World*? How is it then that we are still taught to pray, that this *Kingdom of his may come*?

In Answer to these Questions, it will soon be understood, when I come to my *Second* General Head, in what Sense it is that we pray for this Kingdom, though

SERM. though it is plainly begun already. In XIX. the mean time, to shew you that this Kingdom, and no other, was meant by our blessed Saviour in my Text, it need only be observed, That by understanding the Word *Kingdom* in any other Sense but this, you will confound this Petition with the next: But however that be, the best way to understand the true Meaning of the Words before us, is to enquire in what Sense they were understood by the *Jews*, among whom they were in Use before. For our Saviour, it seems, was so far from affecting Novelty, that he chose to confine himself, in composing this Prayer, as much as possible, to the *Jewish* Forms; out of which, by the Help of such Supplements as were wanting, and by digesting the whole into a new Method and Order, he compiled a complete Prayer for his Disciples. Among others, the Petition in my Text is one, that was used in their publick Worship. It ran in these Words: *Let him make his Kingdom*

Thy Kingdom come.

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*Kingdom reign; let his Redemption flourish; SERM.
and let his Messiah come and deliver his XIX.*

People. From whence it appears, that the Kingdom of the *Messiah* was the Kingdom prayed for by them; and consequently, that the same Kingdom was intended here; which was the Thing I undertook to prove.

Thus having shewn what Kingdom it is, that is the Subject of this Petition, I proceed, in pursuance of my Design, *Secondly*, to explain what is meant by its Coming.

It cannot be denied, that with respect to Christ's Power, with respect to his Dominion both in Earth and Heaven, *his Kingdom is already come*: But withal we must observe, that if there be any of his Subjects to whom his Laws have not yet been published; if there be any to whom his Name has not yet been mentioned, or any who disown his Power; with respect to them it is plain, that his Kingdom is not come, forasmuch as they live not in

SERM. Subjection to his Laws, nor receive any

XIX. Benefit from his Government. Now

it is very well known, that there are many People upon Earth, to whom the Gospel was never published; or if it was, it obtained so little Credit with them, that the Knowledge of it is now utterly forgotten. The great Continent of *America*, and the Islands belonging to it, had never so much as heard of the Name of Christ, till the Time of the renowned *Columbus*. The Discoveries which he made, gave Occasion to that Commerce, which is now settled in the Western Ocean; and thereby became the Means of promoting Christian Knowledge in those dark and uninstructed Regions. But as yet we are assured, it has made but slow Advances, being chiefly confined to those scanty Settlements, which are occupied by *European* Planters; while vast Tracts of Land inhabited by the Natives, containing many Kingdoms known only by their Names, and perhaps many others,
whose

whose Names we have never heard, are SERM.
still sunk in the grossest Ignorance and XIX.
Superstition. And what is much to be
lamented, of the few Christians that are
settled on the Coasts of these vast Do-
minions, the greater Part being *Spani-*
ards, the most wretched Bigots of all
that are enslaved by the Church of
Rome, and live in Bondage and Subjec-
tion to it; the Converts they make a-
mong their Savage Neighbours, are
brought over to their own Idol Wor-
ship. The Seed of God's Word is ne-
ver sow'd by them, but with a Mix-
ture of Tares among it. The Errors
and Corruption of that false Religion;
are taught with as much Care, and in-
stilled with as much Zeal, as the Doc-
trines of Christ himself; and a King-
dom is erected over the Souls and Con-
sciences of their miserably deluded Pro-
felytes, as contrary to Christ's King-
dom, as Darkness is to Light; as con-
trary as a State of the most wretched

SERM. Servitude, to the Glorious Liberty of the
XIX. Sons of God.

Yet this is the Religion, which prevails most in *Europe*, the chief Seat of Christianity it self. Great Care has been taken, and great Art employ'd to plant it on the Coasts of *Asia*, in the great Kingdom of *China*, the *Asiatick* Islands, and in all the richest and most plentiful Countries, where the Missionaries of *Rome* can get footing. In the Kingdom of *Tartary*, and the *Turkish* Parts of *Asia*, where the Gospel of the blessed *Jesus* was first published to the World, the few Christians that remain, are extremely ignorant, and corrupted with many Heresies and Errors. The same Ignorance prevails on the Coasts of *Africa*, where the Gospel was planted early by St. *Mark*. Of all the mighty Kingdoms in this Quarter of the World, none but the Country of the famous *Abyssines*, continues to be entirely Christian. Some of them, if we may believe the Accounts of Travellers, seem

to live without God in the World, hav-SERM.
ing no Priests or Temples, or Signs of XIX.
religious Worship, nor any Tokens of
Devotion in them. The rest of these
Kingdoms, like the greatest Part of *Asia*,
consist for the most Part of Pagans, or
of Believers in the Impostor *Mahomet*;
who partly by the Promise of a Para-
dise hereafter, consisting in the Enjoy-
ment of all sensual Delights, and part-
ly by the Force of Arms, has establish-
ed a Kingdom in these Parts of the
World, as great as even Christendom
it self. In most of these Nations, and
in all Parts of *Europe*, are scattered and
dispersed a great Multitude of *Jews*,
who live in Expectation of the Messiah's
Kingdom, and consider it as a thing
yet to come. Besides these, we may
reckon, that in all Christian Countrys
there are some secret Infidels, and pro-
fess Apostates, *who are Enemies to the*
Cross of Christ, and are as far from own-
ing him to be their King and Gover-
nor, as Mahometans, *Jews*, or Pagans.

SERM. If then from the Numbers of unbeliev-
 XIX. ing People, that almost cover the whole

Face of the Earth, we were able to select the few faithful Subjects that submit to Christ's Power, that pay Obedience to him, and acknowledge him for their Lord and Master, how inconsiderable would their Number be? and how much would his Kingdom appear to fall short of the Descriptions, which are given of it by the Prophets, *that all People, and Nations, and Languages should serve him; that all the Kingdoms of the Earth should become the Kingdoms of the Lord and his Christ; that he should gather together the Out-casts of Israel; and that the Fulness of the Gentiles should come in unto him!* Till these and many other such express Predictions, which are scattered up and down in the Writings of the Prophets, shall be fulfilled by the Growth and Increase of Christ's Church, his Kingdom is not fully come. And therefore, though it is actually commenced already, yet forasmuch as it is

not

not come in its full Latitude and Ex-SERM.
tent, nor in the same Sense wherein XIX.
it was promised by the Prophets, it may ~
very well be made the Subject of our
Prayers.

To conclude this Head: The Establishment of Christ's Kingdom consists in Mens knowing and understanding his Will, and submitting to his Rule and Government.

When therefore we pray, that this *Kingdom may come*, the Meaning of the Request is, that true Christian Knowledge may in all Places flourish and abound. *That the Sound of the Gospel may go out into all Lands, and its Words unto the Ends of the World.* That *Jews*, and *Turks*, and Infidels, and Heathens, and all who have departed from the true Faith of Christ, may renounce their Errors, and submitting to his Laws be intitled to all the Blessings of Christianity. And that we and they, being united under him, professing the same Faith, joining in

SERM. the same Worship, guided and con-
XIX. ducted by the same holy Spirit, may
be made Partakers of the Benefits of
his Death, for the Attainment of
everlasting Life.

Which God of his, &c.





A

S E R M O N

On M A T T. vi. 10.

Thy Kingdom come.

IN discoursing on these Words, SERM.
I have already shewn, that the XX.
Kingdom here meant is the
Kingdom of the Messiah, that
spiritual Dominion, which is exercised
by Christ over all things both in Hea-
ven and Earth; that the Establishment
of this Kingdom consists in Mens
knowing and understanding his Will,
and submitting to his Rule and Go-
vernment; and that as often as we pray;
that this Kingdom may come, our
Meaning ought to be, that true Chri-
stian

SERM. *Christian Knowledge may in all Places
XX. flourish and abound, &c.*

~~~~~ This is the main Substance of my last Discourse, in which I proposed only to shew the Meaning of the Words, that we might know how to use them in our Prayers.

But because it is suggested in the Lord's Prayer it self, by the Order of the two first Petitions, that the Glory of God is most eminently promoted by the Coming of Christ's Kingdom upon Earth, *i. e.* by the Propagation of the Christian Faith, and by the Encrease of Christian Knowledge in the World, and because for this Reason it is the Duty of all Christians to contribute their Endeavours for the Promotion of this End, I shall close the whole Subject with some brief Exhortations to it.

I. That the Glory of God is most eminently promoted by the Growth of Christian Knowledge in the World, is too evident to need any Proof. The  
Blood

Blood of our Saviour had been never SERM.  
shed, his Gospel had been never publish- XX.  
ed, his Religion had been never insti-  
tuted in the World, if his Death and  
Sufferings, his Resurrection and Ascen-  
sion, and the Consequence of these on  
the Lives of Men, had not some Way  
or other conduced to God's Glory, and  
tended to set forth his Perfections to  
the World in the brightest and most  
lively Colours. What an amiable Idea  
must we form of that Mercy, which  
was moved to send the Son of God *to*  
*take upon him our Nature, and submit to*  
*Death upon the Cross*, rather than suffer  
Mankind, without Ransom or Satis-  
faction, to be exposed to the Punish-  
ment of their Sins? What an awful Idea  
must we form of that Justice, which  
could be satisfied by no less a Sacrifice?  
And how must we admire and adore  
that Wisdom, which contrived the Means  
to reconcile his Justice with his Mercy,  
and to give us a full View of those three  
Attributes together, all meeting in the  
most

SERM. most perfect Harmony: Again, if we  
XX. take a View of those mysterious Articles, which concern his own Nature and Essence, what an Idea do *they* give us of the *Greatness* of that Being, the Properties of whose Nature cannot possibly be described by any Language, which our Reason can comprehend! Or lastly, if we consider the moral Part of Christianity, its Doctrines and Precepts for the Conduct of our Lives, and for the Government of our Lusts and Passions, how excellently are they fitted to conform us to his Nature, and to give us an Idea of his Purity and Goodness, above all other Religions in the World! Thus is God's Glory most eminently displayed, by the Religion which his Son has taught us. And if it be viewed further, as it affects our own Happiness, as it tends to purify and reform our Nature, to mortify our Lusts, to subdue our Appetites, to cultivate and improve all Virtues in our Hearts, to enlarge our Views and extend our Pro-  
spect



*Thy Kingdom come.*

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spect to the Interests of another Life; SERM.  
*here* we have new Matter of Praise and XX.

Wonder, new Cause to admire and adore his Goodness, which has been pleased to enlighten us with the Knowledge of his Will, to provide a Cure for the Infirmities and Corruptions of our Nature, to quicken us with his Grace, to enliven us with his Promises, and to intitle us, by Obedience to his Holy Laws, to the Enjoyment of himself hereafter. Thus excellent and perfect in every View, is the Knowledge which Christ has taught us; and thus worthy to be promoted in the World. If then we are to pray for the Coming of this Kingdom, it must needs be our Duty to promote it. We never think it enough in our temporal Concerns, to pray to God for *our daily Bread*: But though we have done this, proceed with as much Care to the Management of our worldly Business, as those who have no Confidence in his gracious Providence, but rely wholly on their own Endeavours.

SERM. Endeavours. The same Care we ought  
 XX. to take, and employ the same Zeal, to  
 bring about the great Work before us;  
 not thinking it enough to make a faint  
 Request, for the Encrease of true Chri-  
 stian Knowledge; but using our Endeavours, in our several Stations, to promote it by our Lives and Actions. God does not work *Miracles* now for the Instruction of the World. Men are not now *inspired* with the Knowledge of their Duty, nor enlightned by a supernatural Power. Whatever is done for the Improvement of their Minds, must be done by some human Means. It is true, that after all our best Endeavours, the Event must be still left to God. Paul *may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God that giveth the Encrease.* Yet withal it must be observed, that without some Endeavours, there will be nothing for God's Grace to work on. If *Paul* doth not plant, nor *Apollos* water, there is scarce Room for an Increase from Heaven. The  
 Seed

Seed of God's Word must be first sown SERM.  
in our Hearts, before the *Sun of Righte-* XX.  
*ousness* can shine upon it, and enliven

it with its friendly Beams. The most  
that can be expected from the Grace of  
God, in an ignorant and uninstructed  
Mind, is to cultivate and prepare the  
Soil, or in other Words to give a teach-  
able Disposition, or an Inclination to  
hear and learn. Whatever is sown in such  
a Soil as this, may be expected to spring  
up and flourish, and by the Blessing of  
God bring forth Fruits *unto Holiness,*  
*and in the End everlasting Life.* But if  
nothing be sown there, however it be  
prepared, nothing good can be expect-  
ed from it. Vices, like ill Weeds, may  
spring up of themselves: But that Chri-  
stian Virtue, to which we are called,  
can have no Root but true Christian  
Knowledge.

If therefore we have really that Re-  
gard for God's Glory, which most of  
us, I hope, think we have, let us shew  
it by such a Zeal for the true Christian  
Faith,

SERM. Faith, as is of all things the most likely  
 XX. ly to promote it; and let none of us  
 say that it is not his Business, because  
 he is not called to that solemn  
 Trust of providing for the Souls of  
 others. For surely in a Cause, which  
 affects God's Glory, we are all greatly,  
 though not equally concerned. We must  
 needs know, that it is our Duty to pro-  
 mote *the Glory of God*, with all the Fa-  
 culties and Powers we have; that we  
 can never promote it in a more effectual  
 Manner, than by teaching Men to  
 serve him as they ought; and that if we  
 have a Regard to his Honour at our  
 Hearts, it will constantly appear by its  
 genuine Effect, *viz.* a Desire to pro-  
 mote Christian Knowledge. For that,  
*the Mouth of the Righteous is exercised in*  
*Wisdom, and his Tongue will be talking*  
*of Judgment.*

It is a sad thing to consider, what a  
 Multitude of Souls, for which the Blood  
 of Christ was shed, are continually lost  
 for want of that Knowledge, which it

was



was the Business of his Life to teach. SERM.  
How can our Charity be exerted better, XX.  
than by copying the Example of our Lord and Master, in scattering and dispersing those Clouds of Ignorance, which overcast the Minds of Men, *giving Light to them that sit in Darknes, and in the Shadow of Death, and guiding their Feet into the Way of Peace.*

We are placed by God's Providence in a Christian Country, where in propagating and promoting true Christian Knowledge, we have none of those Difficulties and Dangers to contend with, that are to be found in other Regions of the Earth. No powerful Opposition from our earthly Rulers, no Danger of Persecution for the Cross of Christ, however *zealous* we are to conduct our Brethren in the Way to everlasting Happiness. On the contrary, it is a Work, which is constantly attended with the Praises of the Wise and Good, and with the secret Approbation of the Wicked; with the Prayers of

SERM. those who are the better for our In-  
 XX. struction, and with the Blessings of God  
 himself. And now is it not strange,  
 that in a Christian Country so little of  
 this Charity should be found? We are  
 apt enough to lament the Ignorance,  
 to pity the Miscarriages, and be sorry  
 for the Faults of others: But in the  
 mean time Who labours to prevent  
 them? Who will take upon him to re-  
 move the Cause? Who teaches and ad-  
 monishes, who reproves and exhorts,  
 who advises and instructs his Neigh-  
 bour? Who should do it, you will say,  
 but those who undertake it; whose Bu-  
 siness it is to teach Men their Duty,  
 and induce them by the best Motives  
 to perform it? Alas! How little can be  
 done by the Preachers of God's Word,  
 if they must needs stand alone against  
 Vice and Ignorance, against the Preju-  
 dices and Mistakes, the Pride, the Fol-  
 ly, the corrupt Principles, and ill  
 Practices of Men! No Religion in the  
 World was ever better taught, than  
 Christi-

Christianity in this Age and Nation: SERM.  
But how little it has prevailed, notwithstanding this; or how greatly Infidelity  
has prevailed against it, I need not go about to shew. Since therefore the common Methods appointed for this Purpose, do not answer the End proposed by them; since *the Labourers that are sent into the Vineyard of the Lord*, are insufficient for the great Work assigned them; since the shameful Corruption of Men's Faith and Manners, has long since been a general Complaint; for God's Sake, let it be a general Concern: Let no Man be content, that he is convinced himself; but let him strive to convince others also; and to make himself an Instrument in the Hand of God's Providence, to convert as many others from the Error of their Ways, as his Place, his Station, his Knowledge, his Example can give him any Influence over. To which generous Attempt, that no Motive may be wanting, it may further be observed, that the Spi-

SERM. rit of our Religion is so well adapted  
 XX. to the Performance of all social Duties,  
 that wherever it is planted, it carries  
 Blessings with it, not only to the Per-  
 son who is so happy as to receive it,  
 but likewise to all those that are con-  
 cerned with him. Charity and Hu-  
 manity, and the Forgiveness of Enemies,  
 are the great Doctrines that it every  
 where inculcates. *Let all Bitterness,*  
*says St. Paul, and Wrath, and Anger, and*  
*Clamour, and Evil-speaking, be put away*  
*from you, with all Malice: and be ye kind*  
*one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving*  
*one another, even as God for Christ's Sake*  
*hath forgiven you.* Thus in the good  
 Christian is implied the good Neigh-  
 bour, and every other Character, that can  
 sweeten Life, and make his Family and his  
 Acquaintance happy. So that he who can  
 infuse true Christian Knowledge in-  
 to the Minds of those that want it, will  
 in some sort share the Benefit himself,  
 from the amiable Qualities which it  
 always carries with it, disposing Men



*Thy Kingdom come.*

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to a peaceable and benign Behaviour SERM.  
towards all that they have to deal with. XX.

Whoever has the Grace to be diligent  
and faithful in performing this pious  
Work, cannot fail to be rewarded by the  
Duty and Obedience of those who are  
instructed by him. When Men are  
once taught what they owe to God,  
when a Sense of Religion is once plant-  
ed in them, there is no fear but they  
will know what they owe to Men, and  
have a strict Regard to their Duty to  
them, in all Circumstances and Rela-  
tions of Life. It would therefore be  
the Interest of a prudent Father to season  
his Child's Mind with religious Notions,  
if it were only to make him dutiful and  
obedient to himself, and submissive to  
his Will and Pleasure. But however  
this be, in point of Conscience he is  
bound, as he tenders his eternal Inte-  
rest, not to suffer a Creature that he  
has brought into Being, to perish for  
want of Care in him; but to furnish  
him with such Helps for the Knowledge

Q. 3

of

SERM. of his Duty, as may lead him to ever-

XX. lasting Life. To neglect this Duty,  
 and to leave our Children to the Sug-  
 gestions of their own Lusts and Passions,  
 is emphatically to deny the Faith; it is  
 to act as if we thought that the Know-  
 ledge of Religion is a thing not worth  
 their having; and what worse Opinion  
 can the vilest of Infidels entertain of the  
 Holy Gospel we profess? The more ex-  
 cellent and perfect our Religion is, the  
 more Care should be taken, that no  
 Time be lost from the Performance of  
 this necessary Work. And to this we are  
 engaged by a further Motive, besides  
 those that have been already mentioned,  
 even the natural Affection which we bear  
 to our own Offspring, and which in  
 all other Cases, except that of Religion,  
 is apt enough to have an Influence on  
 our Hearts. What a strange and in-  
 consistent Behaviour is it, to take so  
 much Pains, and bestow so much Care  
 to fit them for a short Settlement here,  
 and make no Provision for their Hap-  
 piness

pinels in another Life, which we are SERM.  
sure is to last for ever! For a Parent to XX.  
be so destitute of natural Affection, as  
to take away the Life of his helpless  
Infant, is esteemed a most inhuman  
Act. But is this to be compared to  
the Cruelty of him, who can suffer his  
own Child, for want of Care in teach-  
ing him, to take such Courses as will  
ruin him for ever? What Parent that  
has any Bowels of Compassion in him,  
can help trembling at the Thoughts of  
exposing his own Offspring to the Fu-  
ry of God's Wrath for ever? And who  
can say, that this will not be the Case  
of those who are given up by their care-  
less Parents, to the Government of their  
own wild Desires. And if this be the  
Case of the unhappy Children, what  
shall we say of those, who by their fault-  
y Management, have been the *Cause*  
of their Sin and Misery? God forbid,  
that when we come to Judgment, our  
Hearts should reproach us with it! Ra-  
ther may we be able to present our Chil-  
dren,

SERM. dren, and with them as many others  
 XX. as we have any Influence over, at the  
 Judgment Seat of Christ, in the Number of those, *who have fought a good Fight, who have finished their Course, who have kept the Faith; and for whom therefore there is laid up a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give them at that Day,* and not to them only, but likewise to all those who have labour'd to conduct them thither.

And who would not strive for such a Recompense as this? Who would not forfeit his Ease and Quiet; the good Will of his Friends and Neighbours, or any thing which is most valuable and dear in his Esteem, to be rewarded in the Number of those holy Persons, who have been zealous for God's Glory, and the Good of Men's Souls, by the Establishment of Christ's Kingdom upon Earth? by combating and opposing Infidelity and Profaneness, and by propagating both the Knowledge and true Spirit



*Thy Kingdom come.*

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Spirit of Christianity in the Consciences SERM.  
and Souls of Men? XX.

This was the great Aim of the Confessors and Martyrs, that have suffered for the Cause of Christ: This is the Perfection of the true Christian's Character; the highest Pitch of Virtue, we can reach in this Life; and if we do not rest in the Practice of this single Duty, but first purify our selves, and then instruct others, it is a sure Way to true Happiness hereafter.

*Which God of his infinite, &c.*





A

# S E R M O N

On M A T T. VI. 10.

*Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is  
in Heaven.*

SERM.  
XXI.



THESE Words are the last of those three Petitions, in the Prayer which was given us by our blessed Saviour, that are to be considered not only as Petitions, but likewise as Acts of Worship. In the first we acknowledge, that the Name of God *is worthy to be praised and had in Honour.* In the second we profess our sincere Belief, that his

*Thy Will be done on Earth, &c.* 235

his Glory can no way be so effectually SERM.  
promoted, as by the Coming of his XXI.  
Kingdom, *i. e.* by the Increase of true  
Christian Knowledge, till it is spread o-  
ver the Face of the Earth. In the third,  
which is the Subject of my Discourse at  
present, we declare, that it is our Duty  
to promote God's Glory by our Actions,  
as well as by our Faith; that the Com-  
ing of Christ's Kingdom, or true Chri-  
stian Knowledge, is intended to pro-  
duce Obedience, forasmuch as it is the  
Duty of all reasonable Creatures to con-  
form to God's Will in all things: And  
therefore we pray, that we may be able  
to do this in the most acceptable and  
perfect Manner, or, in the Words of my  
Text, *that his Will may be done on Earth,*  
*as it is in Heaven.*

In discoursing on which Words, I  
shall confine my self at present to a brief  
Exposition of the Words themselves,  
with a practical Application of them.

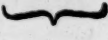
I. An Exposition of the Words them-  
selves. And here, among the Multitude  
of

236 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

SERM. of Divisions that are given us, by which  
XXI. the Will of God is variously explained,  
and considered in many different Views,

I shall only take notice of the Distinction which is made between the Will of his Precept, as it is sometimes called, and the Will of his Counsel or Decree. By the Will of his Counsel, or which is the same thing, of his Decree, is generally understood his eternal Purpose, by which he has pre-ordained the Events of things from the Beginning to the End of Time; insomuch that the Counsels and Designs of Men, however freely they act, do finally concur to the Execution of his Will, and to the Performance of his most gracious Purposes. In this Sense the Will of God does always take Effect; it is always done both in Earth and Heaven, nor can it ever be defeated by any human Means, however we may oppose our Wills to his, or labour to disappoint his Counsels. *There are many Devices in the Heart of Man,* said one, who understood it well; never-



nevertheless *the Counsel of the Lord, that* SERM.  
*shall stand.* Accordingly we find God XXI.  
himself declaring, *I will work, and who*   
*shall let it? The Lord of Hosts hath pur-*  
*posed, and who shall disannull it? And his*  
*Hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it*  
*back? I am God, and there is none like me,*  
*declaring the End from the Beginning, and*  
*from ancient Times the things that are not*  
*yet done, saying, My Counsel shall stand,*  
*and I will do all my Pleasure.* This is  
what is meant by the Will of God's  
Counsel; in complying with which we  
are merely passive; we have nothing to  
do, but to submit to his Pleasure; to be-  
lieve that the Issues and Events of things,  
being under his Government and Directi-  
on, are all ordered with the most  
perfect Wisdom; and that though we  
are not able to discover his Designs,  
yet we ought to be satisfied with his  
Dispensations to us, as well knowing,  
*that his Judgments are unsearchable, and*  
*his Ways past finding out.*

But

238 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

SERM. But to the Will of his Precept, or  
 XXI. which is the same thing, of his Com-  
 ~mands, an active Obedience is required.  
 This is that Will, which he has any  
 way revealed, as the Measure of our  
 Obedience to him. Whatever we dis-  
 cover by the Light of Nature to be a-  
 greeable to the Will of God, whatever  
 the holy Scriptures have taught us fur-  
 ther, concerning the Manner in which  
 it ought to be performed, is the Will  
 of God's Precept or Command. And  
 to this we are bound to conform *our*  
 Wills, and to regulate our Actions by  
 it. This being the Reason for which it  
 was revealed by him, who gives us  
 Power to perform it. *Which* of these  
 Senses is here to be understood, is the  
 Question that now lies before us. It is  
 certain, that the Words, *Thy Will be*  
*done*, do most naturally import the for-  
 mer, *that* being the Sense in which they  
 are understood in the Prayer, which  
 was offered by our Lord himself before his  
 bitter Sufferings upon the Cross; saying,  
 O

*O my Father, if this Cup may not pass away* SERM.  
*from me, except I drink it, thy Will be* XXI.  
*done:*

In which Words it is plain our Saviour does not pray, to be endued with Strength to perform God's Will by an active Obedience to it, but declares himself willing and content to suffer whatever should be inflicted on him. Agreeable to this Sense have been the Expositions, which some have given, of the Petition in my Text; supposing it was designed as an Acknowledgment or Confession, that we submit and acquiesce in God's Dealings with us, being content to suffer whatever Misery and Hardship shall in the Course of his Providence befall us. But to this it may be answered, that this Sense of the Words does not well agree with the Words which follow, *On Earth as it is in Heaven*, where the Example of the holy Angels is understood to be proposed as a Pattern for our Obedience here: And because it is agreed, that those blessed Spirits are too happy  
in

SERM. in the Enjoyment of their great Crea-  
 XXI. tor, to be acquainted with any Misery  
 ~ or Sorrow, they cannot properly be  
 proposed as Examples of Patience, but  
 rather of an active Obedience to God's  
 Laws, in all Instances of Duty that  
 may arise. Others therefore have ex-  
 plained the Petition in my Text, as a  
 Request to God, to dispose us by his  
 Grace to comply with his Precepts and  
 Commands: In like Manner as the ho-  
 ly Angels, that encompass his Throne,  
 are ready at all Times to receive his  
 Orders, and to execute his Will and  
 Pleasure. And indeed it must be al-  
 lowed, that as Obedience to God's  
 Laws is a much more general and com-  
 prehensive Duty, than Submission to his  
 Judgments only, it is more likely to be  
 the Meaning of the Prayer. But with-  
 al it must be observed, that as Patience  
 and Submission to the Dispensations of  
 God's Providence to us, is included in  
 the Number of those Precepts or Com-  
 mands which God has given us to be a  
 Rule

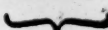


Rule of Duty, it must consequently be SERM.  
included in the Prayer. By the Will XXI.  
of God therefore, we are here to under-  
stand his Will in both Senses of the  
Word: Not only that Will which  
he requires us to perform, but that also  
which he executes upon us; not only  
that Will which is a Rule to us, but  
that also which in some sort is a Rule  
to him. That Will which determines  
him to deal with us, as he does, and  
to which we must ascribe, as the first  
Cause of all, whatever happens to us  
in the whole Course of our Lives.  
The former of these it is our Duty to  
obey; and to be content and well satis-  
fied with the latter; and to comply  
with God's Will in both these Respects,  
is fully to perform what we ask of God,  
when we say, *Thy Will be done.*

But because the Performance of God's  
Will in Heaven, is proposed in the next  
Words as an Example upon Earth, the  
next Question therefore that arises from  
my Text, is, in what Manner it is done

SERM. in Heaven. One Exposition that has  
XXI. been given of these Words is, that the

Example of Obedience which is here  
fetch'd from Heaven, is taken from the  
Motion of the Stars, which ever since  
they were fix'd in the Firmament of  
Heaven, have continued in the same  
Place that was at first assigned them,  
without quitting their Stations, or dis-  
turbing that Beauty and Harmony of  
Order, which was established by their  
great Creator. But sure, among the  
Multitude of intellectual Beings that  
inhabit those bright Abodes, we need  
not have Recourse to any lifeless Crea-  
ture, as an Example to our Virtue here.  
How much better Patterns are those  
glorious Spirits, that are continually  
employed in praising God; *those Angels*  
*of his that fulfill his Commandments, and*  
*hearken unto the Voice of his Words!*  
These, doubtless, are the Examples  
which Christ proposes, as most worthy  
of our Notice and Regard. And since  
he proposes them, it must needs be  
worth

worth while to enquire, in what Man-SERM.  
ner they perform his Will, and in what XXI.  
Sense they are Examples to us. 

It is but little, that the Scriptures teach us about the Nature of these glorious Beings; and perhaps it was impossible, considering our Weakness, to have taught us much more than they have. Our Faculties and Powers are so short of theirs, that we can no more be made sensible of the Difference that there is between us, than Brutes can have a Notion of that Principle of Reason, by which we are distinguished from them. But as these are the highest Order of created Beings, we may reasonably conclude that their Obedience is perfect, that the Service which they pay to their God, and ours, is suitable to the Relation they bear to him, without any Resistance of their Will against his, without any Inclination to withdraw their Duty, but with the highest Delight and Satisfaction in performing it, springing from the best and most generous Mo-

SERM. tives, viz. Admiration of his Wisdom,  
 XXI. Gratitude for his Goodness, and Love  
 of all his amiable Perfections. From

hence we may gather further, that their Obedience is chearful, and consequently that it is quick and speedy, free from murmuring and repining, and unnecessary Delays, and ready to undertake the most laborious Service, forasmuch as there is no Service too hard to be performed by *that Labour which proceedeth of Love*. We may likewise conclude further, that their Obedience is general, disposing them at all Times, and on all Occasions, to perform the whole Will of God, not declining any Duty, because it is hard, nor overlooking it, because it is easy; not hoping to atone for the Want of one by a greater Zeal in the Performance of another; but constantly and regularly discharging their several Offices, without any Exception or Reserve. These are the Examples we are taught to copy; but because they cannot be exactly copied,  
 it



it remains that we enquire, in the third SERM.  
and last Place, XXI.

III. In what Sense we pray, *that God's Will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.* Here we must remember what was said before, that the Petition in my Text, is not only a Petition, but likewise an Act of Worship; an Acknowledgment, or Confession, that it is the Duty of all Creatures to conform to the Will of God; that it ought to be obeyed by us Mortals upon Earth, as well as by the blessed Angels in Heaven. That as it is their Duty to perform the whole, so it is ours to do the most we can; that when we have done all, that our Faculties and Powers can enable us in this Life to do, we have done infinitely less, than his Goodness deserves, and the Greatness of his Majesty may require. When therefore we pray, that we may *do his Will, as it is done by the holy Angels in Heaven*, it is not so much a Request that we may do it, as an Acknowledgment

R 3

of

246 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

SERM. of what we owe to him; we are not  
 XXI. to expect that, in this State of Trial,  
 { we shall arrive at such perfect Holiness;  
 but we are to declare our sincere Desire, that we may arrive at as much Perfection as we can, and that, so far as is possible and consistent with human Frailty, we may conform our Wills to his; we are to wish we were able to do him better Service, being sensible of those many natural Frailties, which render our best Services imperfect. At the same time, that we acknowledge his Wisdom and Goodness, in making us such Creatures as we are, we are also to breath out the pious Wishes of our Souls, that we were able to serve him in as acceptable a Manner, as his better and more perfect Creatures; and forasmuch as we know, that this is not to be done, till by being divested of this Vail of Flesh, *we are admitted to the Fellowship of those blessed Spirits*, we must pray, that in the mean time we may conform to God's Will, by submitting  
 with

with Patience to the Miseries and In-SERM.  
firmities, that are incident to this pre-XXI.  
sent Life; among all the Changes and ~~~~~  
Chances which attend it, resigning our  
selves up to his gracious Providence,  
well satisfied with that Degree of  
Strength, which it shall please him in  
his great Wisdom to allot us; and using  
our Endeavours with Fear and Reve-  
rence, by a sincere, though not a perfect  
Obedience to his Laws, to exchange it,  
when he pleases, for a better. Thus  
much for the Meaning of the Petition  
in my Text. I proceed now, in pur-  
suance of my first Design, to make a  
practical Application of it. This I shall  
do, by considering distinctly the Reason-  
ableness of complying with the Will of  
God, and the Benefits resulting from  
it.

I. The Reasonableness of complying  
with the Will of God. And because the  
Relation between God and us, though  
it cannot be described by any apt Si-  
militude, is nevertheless expressed at the

SERM. Beginning of this Prayer, by the Relation between a Father and his Son, let us first consider how the Case stands in that plain and familiar Instance. Suppose it were said, that it is the Duty of a Son to comply with his Father's Will; Would any Father think this Doctrine false, or endeavour to find out Exceptions? If any does, let him stay till his Son offers to dispute any one of his most severe Commands, and then he will soon see, how reasonable it is, that the Son should obey the Father. There is indeed one Exception, and but one, that can be made to the Authority of an earthly Parent; and that is, when he requires an Obedience from his Child, that is inconsistent with the Laws of God. In this Case, the Child is not only excused, but even bound in Conscience to disobey the Parent, and modestly to insist on the Necessity of obeying God, in Opposition to all other Power. But even this supposes, that both Son and Father are bound to comply with their



their Father *which is in Heaven*: Other-SERM.  
wise there would be no Pretence, in XXI.  
this Case, to dispute even the Commands  
of an earthly Parent.

Since therefore the only reasonable  
and just Exception, that a Son can have  
to the Authority of his Father, is the  
Authority of a superior Power; and since  
there is no Power superior to that of  
God, it follows, that no Exception can  
be made to his Authority, and there-  
fore that it is the Duty of all reason-  
able Creatures, to conform their Wills  
to his. This will appear further, by  
examining the Grounds upon which  
the Authority of all Parents is built.  
The only Reason we can have for *requi-*  
*ring* Obedience from our Children ac-  
cording to the Flesh, is, either the Share  
we had in bringing them into Being,  
the Care we have taken to nourish and  
preserve them, the natural Affection  
we are supposed to bear them, or the  
Notion of our superior Wisdom. Now  
for all these Reasons, it is much more  
our

250 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

SERM. our Duty to pay Obedience to the Will  
XXI. of God, without any Exception or Re-

serve. Did our natural Parents give us Life and Being? It was only in Obedience to those Laws of Nature, which were settled and ordained by him. Did they nourish and preserve their helpless Infants, when they were able to make no Provision for themselves? It was by virtue of that Instinct, which God planted in them for the Good of their tender Offspring, and which he has also planted, with the same wise Design, in many Creatures that are void of Reason. Do they still shew their Fondness and Affection to them, labouring and contriving to promote their Happiness, and make a comfortable Provision for them? This also is the Effect of the same wise Design, which planted these Passions and Affections in us, and turned them upon their proper Objects. Or lastly, do we submit to our earthly Parents, on the Account of their superior Wisdom? Much more are we bound to submit

submit to God's Will, who is infinite in SERM.  
Wisdom, as in all other Attributes, and XXI.  
who therefore must be allowed to be the  
fittest Judge of what is best and most  
convenient for us. Thus you see, that  
all the Reasons, for which Children are  
required to pay Obedience to their  
earthly Parents, are much stronger Rea-  
sons for Obedience to God, and Sub-  
mission to his Will and Pleasure.

And now what can we do, to return  
Thanks to God for these great and  
undeserved Mercies? What can we do  
but make his Will our Rule, as it is  
the Rule of all other Creatures, those on  
Earth as well as those in Heaven. Not  
only the holy Angels that attend his  
Throne, but likewise all Parts of the  
material World, though destitute of  
Reason, are in some sort obedient to  
the Will of their great Creator. The  
Moon observes her appointed Season,  
and *the Sun knoweth his going down.*  
The Sea is confined within the Bounds  
prescribed it, in Obedience to that  
Voice,

252 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

SERM. Voice, which reduced it into Order, saying, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud Waves be staid.* The fiercest Elements, *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapours, Winds and Storms* fulfill his Word. The Lions roaring after their Prey, do seek their Meat from God. The Beasts of the Field, the Fowls of the Air, and *whatsoever walketh through the Paths of the Seas*, while they follow the Dictates of their several Natures, do but act in Obedience to his high Commands, and execute his Will and Pleasure. And shall Man, the only Being on this Side Heaven, that is capable of performing any reasonable Service, upon a Principle of Love and Duty, be the only Being that is wanting in his Obedience? Where then is the Privilege and Use of Reason? What are we the better for those Faculties and Powers, by which we are enabled to contemplate God, if after all we are more irregular and disorderly Beings, than those that know nothing of him? If any thing can be gathered from the Knowledge of



a God, it is, that his Will should be SERM.  
the Rule and Measure of the Obedience XXI.  
of all his Creatures. The Reasonable-  
ness of this has been already shewn: I  
conclude with a few Motives to recom-  
mend it. And first, by resolving to  
conform to God's Will, Religion grows  
easy to us. Great are the Complaints  
that are sometimes made, chiefly by sen-  
sual and worldly-minded Men, of the  
Difficulties of a Christian Life. And  
indeed it must be owned, that the Go-  
vernment of our Passions, the Conquest  
of our Lusts and corrupt Affections, are  
very painful and laborious Virtues. But  
when once we are resolved to do the  
Will of God, the Difficulty quite va-  
nishes and disappears. When we act  
with this View, all Duties are alike;  
there is no Difference between the hard  
and easy: For in this Case the Law of  
God is our only Rule, we look no fur-  
ther than to know his Will, and our  
Way lies plain before us. We never  
question the Reasonableness of *executing*  
his Commands, nor regard whether the  
Task

SERM. Task imposed upon us be agreeable to  
 XXI. our *own* Wills or not: But chearfully  
 ~~~~~ set about it, without staying to consider it, well knowing, that however it may mortify our Passions, however it may restrain and controul our Appetites, yet, inasmuch as God wills and requires it to be done, his Grace will be sufficient for us.

One Advantage therefore, that must necessarily arise from a Readiness to conform to God's holy Will, is, that it makes our Religion easy; that it sweetens those harsher and severer Doctrines, which place our Duty in an unamiable Light, diverting our Thoughts from the Difficulty of performing them, to the Reasonableness of submitting to them; and thereby disposing us to the constant Practice of whatever is most irksome and disagreeable to our Nature, provided it be agreeable to the *Author* of our Nature, whose Will we acknowledge to be the Pattern of our own, as it is the Standard of all Purity and Perfection. And this is the first Benefit

fit resulting to us, from a Conformity SERM.
to the Will of God. XXI.

II. The next Advantage I shall mention, is, that Quiet and Repose, that constant and habitual Peace of Mind, which a good Man enjoys in all Difficulties and Distresses, which in the Course of God's Providence befall him. He knows that all Hardships and Afflictions that can happen, are the Effects of the most perfect Wisdom; that therefore they are sent with some wise Design, though he perhaps is not able to discover it. He is also very sure, that the great Being which sends them, is infinitely good and gracious, that *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*: That therefore the Evils which he now endures, are either no real Evils, or else through his Patience and Contentment under them, *they will work for him a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.*

A Man that thinks thus, is out of Fortune's Power: No Affliction, no Calamity can reach him. He cannot
be

256 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

SERM. be disappointed, because every Thing
 XXI. which happens, is therefore in his Opi-
 ~~~~~ nion best; if he fails of that which in  
 his own Judgment he preferred, he  
 corrects his own Judgment by the Event;  
 and concludes he was wrong in the  
 Choice he had made, because it was not  
 the Choice of Heaven. Thus by re-  
 signing to the Will of Providence, we  
 are made easy in all Circumstances of  
 Life. And what can we desire more  
 on this Side Heaven, than to be supe-  
 rior to the Blows of Fortune; not to  
 be disturbed by those Accidents and  
 Disasters, that encompass us in this mor-  
 tal Life, but constantly to preserve the  
 same Evenness of Temper, the same  
 Steadiness of Mind, the same Chearful-  
 ness of Heart, in Sickness as in Health,  
 in Poverty as in Riches, in Contempt  
 and Reproach, (if that should be our  
 Fortune) as in the highest Pitch of Ho-  
 nour and Renown? It is not the dif-  
 ferent Circumstances and Conditions we  
 are in, the different Spheres in which  
 we



we act, the different Rank we bear, SERM.  
the different Shews and Appearances XXI.  
we make in Life; but the different  
Tempers and Dispositions of Men, on  
which their respective Happiness de-  
pends. He that has fewest Wants and  
fewest Sorrows, must be allowed to be  
the happiest Man; and that is he, who  
is most thankful in Prosperity, and  
most patient in Adversity and Distress;  
or, in other Words, it is *He*, that is  
best pleased with all the Dispensations  
of God's Providence in the World, and  
is ready in all Accidents and Events that  
happen, to say chearfully, *God's Will be  
done.* Thus is Submission and Obe-  
dience to God's Will the best Founda-  
tion for all human Happiness, with Re-  
spect to this present Life. But thirdly  
and lastly,

III. Another Benefit arising from such  
a Readiness to glorify God's holy Name,  
by Obedience to his Will and Pleasure,  
is the Prospect of a future Recompense  
in Heaven. Notwithstanding the Rea-

258 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

SERM. sonableness of performing God's Will,  
 XXI. notwithstanding the Delight and Satisfaction which it yields, and the Comfort it affords us in all Troubles and Disasters, that can disturb our present Quiet and Repose, it has pleased the divine Goodness, for the Encouragement of our Virtue, to allure our Hopes to a Compliance with his Will, by the Prospect of a further Recompense in Heaven. What this will be, wherein it will consist, how greatly it will overbalance our best Services and Endeavours, and how infinitely transcend our Hopes, may be gather'd partly from the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, and in some sort from the Nature of the Thing; but by neither of these Ways shall we be able, in this Life, to arrive at a perfect and complete Idea of that Glory which is to be revealed. *The Treasures in Heaven, the Crown of Glory, the Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away,* and many other Expressions of the like Nature and

and Import, are adapted to our present SERM.  
Passions, by which we are inclined to XXI.  
pursue Wealth and Greatness, and to be  
fond of Crowns and Kingdoms. When  
we are stript of these Bodies, and our  
Passions with them, our Love of these  
things will cease. New Hopes and De-  
sires, new Affections and Dispositions,  
new Enjoyments and new Pleasures will  
succeed, such as are worthy of an im-  
mortal Being, such as will fill the Ca-  
pacities of our Souls, and answer all  
our Hopes and Wishes. But as it is  
impossible to *describe* such a State of  
Happiness, so perhaps, if it were possi-  
ble, it would have no Influence upon  
some of us, while we continue in this  
mortal Life.

But let him that thinks thus, con-  
sider with himself, what it is that  
makes him so averse to his Duty,  
and causes him to look upon the Service  
of his Maker as a painful and uneasy  
Task. Our Reason tells us, that we  
ought to honour and obey him. What

260 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

SERM. is it that hinders? What makes us so  
 XXI. unwilling to comply with so sure a  
 ~~~~~ Guide? Is it not our Passions, *that war*  
in our Members? When therefore those
 Passions cease to move us, it is plain
 we shall have other Thoughts, then we
 shall esteem it our greatest Happiness,
 our highest Honour, to do the Will
 of God, as it is done by superior Be-
 ings; who having no Passions of this
 Kind to gratify, have no such Bias to
 mislead their Wills, and divert them from
 the Pursuit of their only Happiness, in
 the Enjoyment of their great Creator.
 Such will be our Thoughts beyond the
 Grave, and such therefore should our
 Thoughts be now. We should consi-
 der, that Obedience to the Will of
 God will be then its own Reward; that
 nothing but the Opposition of our
 Lust and Passions can hinder it from
 being so at present; and that if we
 can but subdue *these*, Obedience will
 be a Pleasure; a Pleasure even here,
 much

as it is in Heaven.

261

much more hereafter; when in the SERM.
Company of Angels and Archangels, and XXI.
of all the Host of Heaven, we shall ~~~~~
continually be employed in serving
that God, in whose Presence there is
Fulness of Joy, and at whose right
Hand there is Pleasure for evermore.

Now to God, &c.





A

S E R M O N

Before the KING's House-
hold at *Hampton-Court*,
October 3d, 1731.

MATT. vi. 11.

Give us this Day our daily Bread.

SERM.
XXII.



THE Comforts and Conveni-
encies, which God's Provi-
dence dispenses for the Sup-
ply of our worldly Wants,
tho' distributed by him with the greatest
Wisdom, and carrying with them the
highest Marks of Goodness, are never-
theless, through the Passions and Mi-
stakes

stakes of Men, the Cause of great Disorder in the World. The Want of them is attended with Uneasiness and Discontent, tempting us to repine at God's gracious Providence, as if we were not kindly dealt with: The Possession of them is accompanied with Arrogance and Pride, causing us to repose too great a Trust in them, forgetting who it was that gave them. Sometimes they are gained by unlawful Methods; sometimes withheld from those who have a Right to them; and sometimes they are employed in the Service of our Lusts, and made the Instruments of Luxury and Excess. To obviate these Evils, wise Men have thought that a middle State of Life is best, as being least exposed to those dangerous Temptations, which arise, on the one hand, from too great Abundance, and on the other hand, from Indigence and Want. And indeed if a good Man might be allowed to chuse, or had the Liberty of asking for such a State of Life, as he

SERM. should think to be the most convenient,
XXII. he could not ordinarily make a better
Choice. But it is not for us, who are
dependent Creatures, to measure out
our own Happiness for our selves; but
to be content with that Station, which
God's Providence has assigned us, to
conform our selves to it, to be easy in
it, and to rely on his Bounty for such
a Share of good things, as will be most
proper and convenient for it. It is
therefore a much better and more rea-
sonable Request, which we are taught
by our blessed Lord to make, not that
our Condition may be chang'd from
what it is, but made comfortable and
convenient for us, by a constant Sup-
ply of those outward Blessings, which
are suitable to our respective Stations.
For so, I suppose, we are to understand
this Petition; *Give us this Day our dai-
ly Bread.*

Bread is the best and most useful
Viand, that God has given us for the
Support of Life; the great Preservative
of

of Health and Strength, by the Help SERM.
of which we can make a shift to live, XXII.
though destitute of all other Nourish-
ment, and without which our Tables
are but ill supplied in the midst of all
other Plenty. For this Reason it is u-
sed very properly to express such a
Competency of Provision, as is indeed
sufficient, but no more than sufficient
for us. For the same Reason it is also
called *Daily Bread*, from which we are to
understand, how little should con-
tent us; even so much as is sufficient
for our present Needs, and may just
answer the Occasions of the Day; with-
out *taking Thought*, or being over-much
concerned about the Wants, which
another Day may bring. Lastly, it is
called *our Bread*, not as it were our
Property, or as if we had any Title to
it, but as specifying what Share we ask
for; even so much as is suitable to our
Circumstances and Condition, and to
the present State of our Fortune in the
World. So much may we call ours,
because God has given it; and to be
deprived

SERM. deprived of this, be it more or less,
XXII. would be a Loss and a Disappointment

to us. It is evidently God's Will, as appears from his Dispensations, and from the Course of his Providence in the World, that there should be great Difference in the Circumstances of Men. Some he has advanced to high Dignity and Honour, and some sunk in the lowest Offices of Life. The Wants and Necessities of these Men are different, according to their different Figure in the World; not only their imaginary, but their real Wants; not only those Wants which they create to themselves, by their own wild and irregular Desires, but also those Wants which are created for them, by the Rank and Station in which Providence has placed them, and which they may lawfully desire to be supplied. A Multitude of Attendants, and a great Retinue, may be necessary for those who bear Rule and Authority, or who are in any eminent or conspicuous Station, forasmuch as they help to secure Obedience, and tend
to

to promote Reverence and Respect. SERM.
There is also a certain Decency in domestic Furniture, in Diet and Apparel, to be observed by those who are possessed of much meaner Fortunes, in proportion to the Wealth wherewith God has blessed them, provided it be conducted by the Rules of Frugality, and provided it be free also from Ostentation and Vanity, as well as from Luxury and Excess. Our Wants may likewise be very much increased by the Relation, which we bear to others; by the Necessity of providing for our immediate Offspring, or those who for other Causes, of which there may be many, can have any reasonable Expectations from us. All these are Reasons for enlarging our Requests beyond the Bounds of our own natural Desires; so that That, which is allowed to be enough for one, may be far short of what is necessary for another; and therefore, when we all join in our Requests to God, that he will *give us our daily Bread*, we may very reasonably have
different

SERM. different Meanings. He whom God's
XXII. Providence has appointed to perform
the meanest Offices for the Use of others,
may perhaps ask no more, when he
makes this Petition, than the Use of his
Limbs, the Enjoyment of his Health,
and God's Blessing upon his honest La-
bours, that he may earn his Living by
the Sweat of his Brows, according to
the Intention and Design of Providence,
which has placed him in that humble
Station, and can as easily advance him
from that low Condition to a State of
everlasting Happiness, as from the high-
est Pitch of human Greatness; and in
the mean time, can make even that Con-
dition to abound with as much solid
and substantial Happiness, as can be had
from the highest Station upon Earth.
But he, who was either born to a more
exalted Fortune, or, by the Blessing of
God upon his good Endeavours, has
acquired it by his own Art or Labour,
may be allowed to include more, in
his Petition for *daily Bread*, than those
who are of meaner Substance. Thus
we

we see, that to pray for our *daily Bread* SERM.
is, to pray for such a Share of all out-XXII.
ward Blessings, as is necessary for our
Well-being in the World; and That,
not only a mere Maintenance or Sub-
sistence, but such a suitable Provision,
as though it cannot be sufficient to make
us independent for the future, may ne-
vertheless be enough to make us easy for
the present, in a Way suitable to our
respective Stations. But whereas it was
said above, that by *daily Bread* is meant
no more than such a competent Provi-
sion, as may just answer the Occasions
of the Day; and whereas it is implied
in the Petition it self, that we should
ask for no more at once, being directed
to pray only, that he will give it us
this Day, exclusively of all future
Wants; we are not to understand, that
we are hereby prohibited to make Pro-
vision for our selves against a Time of
Need, or to lay up for others as
much as can be spared from the Store,
wherewith God has blessed us. This
is

SERM. is no more than we all know to be a
XXII. Duty, and no more than is consistent
with the Petition in my Text for the
Supply of our present Exigencies only.
For though it may be proper, for the
Sake of others and our selves, to provide
more than we strictly want at present;
yet it may not be proper to ask more
of God, of whom the less we ask, the
more Humility we shew, and the more
Confidence do we place in his Bounty
to us; confessing withal, that every
Day we live, we depend only on
his gracious Providence, not only for
those things, which are then to be be-
stowed, but for those also, which we
have received already. And hence it is,
that the Rich and Great, who never
want a competent Provision for them-
selves, do nevertheless, as often as the
Day returns, very properly renew their
Request to God, that he will give them
their daily Bread; intimating thereby
their Acknowledgment to him, that their
Plenty proceeds from his Bounty to
them,

them, and that notwithstanding the SERM. Treasures they have laid up in Store, XXII. they depend wholly on his Goodness for the Use of them; since he might, if he pleased, by a single Act of his Will, take them from their Treasures, or their Treasures from them, and leave them destitute of all worldly Comfort. In short, by asking for our daily Bread, we declare our Confidence and Trust in God, that he will supply us from Time to Time; that as he will relieve us at our Request to-day, he will relieve us also at our Request to-morrow; that it is not for us, like the Prodigal in the Gospel, to desire our whole Fortune may be given us at once, but to trust it in the Hands of Providence; where it will certainly be much safer than in our own, and from whence it will be dispensed in such Portions, and at such Seasons, as will be most proper and convenient for us. In the mean time, it will argue no Distrust of this Providence, if we labour and endeavour, in
our

SERM. our several Stations, to promote our
 XXII. own Fortunes for our selves; this being
 ~~~~~ the Method, by which Providence is  
 accustomed to dispense its Bounty to us.  
 Thus while we are praying for the Bread  
 of one Day, we may lawfully be provid-  
 ing for another; and when we have  
 provided for many Days and Years, we  
 may still ask for our daily Bread, inas-  
 much as we are dependent on God's Boun-  
 ty still, and know not how soon he  
 may revoke his Blessings, and leave us  
 in utter Indigence and Want.

Thus much for the Meaning of the  
 Petition in my Text; I proceed now  
 to a few practical Observations, and so  
 conclude.

And First, by thus praying for our  
 daily Bread, we are taught (as I observ-  
 ed) to depend on God's Providence for  
 all the Comforts and Conveniencies of  
 Life. Not to rely on our own Craft  
 and Subtlety, much less on our Fraud  
 and Treachery, as if we were able to  
 over-rule God's Will, or to frustrate  
 and



and disappoint his Counsels; but to SERM.  
look up to him for the Success of our XXII.  
Designs, and for the Fruits of all our  
Labour. With these Thoughts about  
us, we shall be careful to do nothing,  
that we have reason to think will be  
displeasing to God, without whose As-  
sistance it cannot be expected that any of  
our Designs will prosper. For the same  
Reason, we shall be careful to pursue no-  
thing we set about by dishonest and  
unlawful Methods, being assured that  
our Projects so managed and conducted,  
can never be attended with a Blessing  
from above, and therefore that it is  
in vain to ask God's Assistance, while  
we are engaged in such Practices as he  
abhors. One Advantage therefore we  
receive from this Prayer is, that as often  
as we repeat it, we are put in mind of  
the Necessity of being upright in all  
our Dealings, and the Vanity of expect-  
ing Prosperity in the World, while we  
seek it by dishonest Methods, which,  
however they may seem to advance our

SERM. Interest, and for some time to increase  
 XXII. our Stores, seldom fail at last to bring  
 ~~~~~ Shame and Disappointment, and to  
 end in our utter Ruin. But

Secondly, By acknowledging that all we receive, is the Bounty or free Gift of God, every thing which is brought about by God's Providence to our Advantage, is not only received with the greater Gratitude, but enjoyed with the more Pleasure and Content. To imagine that Good and Evil are distributed without Reason, and that *there is one Event to the Righteous and the Wicked*, must to a good Man be a very melancholy Thought. But to know that God's Providence is concerned in the Disposal of all Events, which ever happen in the World, and that nothing can befall us without the Counsel or Permission of an infinitely gracious Being, who will hearken to our Prayers, and relieve our Wants, and supply us with all Comforts and Conveniencies, that are necessary for our Passage through
 this

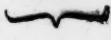
this Vale of Misery, must be a chear-SERM.
ful Reflection to one who makes it his XXII.
Endeavour to secure to himself an In-
terest in Heaven, and is confident that
whatever happens, happens well for him,
while he studies to approve himself to
the great Author of his Being, and flies
to him for Refuge in Distress. To
such a Man as this, who has his Eyes
fixt on Heaven, God's Blessings are
doubly welcome; First, as they are
Blessings, and in their own Nature wel-
come; and Secondly, as they come from
God, whose Favour and Protection he
discovers with the Eye of Faith in his
various Dispensations to him. Prospe-
rity and Success in his worldly Busi-
ness, is to him an Argument that his
Prayers are heard, which is an infinitely
greater and more substantial Happiness,
than Prosperity it self can give. But a
Man of this Turn must needs be happy,
though Success never crowns his Wishes.
Disappointments themselves become
Blessings to him, forasmuch as even

SERM. these are the Gifts of God, and he has
 XXII. Reason to think, will be much better for
 ~ him, than that which he made the Sub-
 ject of his Prayers. Nothing can be
 indifferent to a Man so disposed; every
 thing which happens, conspires to give
 him Pleasure, and to raise his Affiance
 and Trust in God, which is the highest
 Happiness that this World can give.
 If his Allowance of good things be but
 short and scanty, 'tis as much as he asks;
 'tis his daily Bread; 'tis as much as
 God's Providence thinks proper for him,
 and therefore he is well satisfied with it.
Having Food and Raiment, therewith he
 is content, and would still be content,
 if it were taken from him, well know-
 ing that even this would be more to his
 Advantage, for that the Want of it
 would be made up to him hereafter.
 Thus does this Confidence and Trust in
 God make us chearful in all Circum-
 stances and Conditions.

But Thirdly, we may observe, that
 by thus praying to God, and thereby
 considering

considering him as the great Author of SERM.
our Riches, we become humble in the XXII.
midst of Plenty. Affluence and Abun-
dance is apt to make us insolent, espe-
cially if we consider it as an Acquisition
of our own, and forget who it was
that gave it. But constantly to offer
up our Request to God, that he will
give us our daily Bread, is to own our
Dependence on his daily Favour, to
acknowledge the Uncertainty of our
worldly Riches, and to humble our
selves before him, as unable by our own
Strength to provide for our many Mi-
series and Wants. Without asking for
our Bread, we might think it was our
own, as too many do, who according-
ly misuse it in all Wantonness of Riot
and Excess. But to ask, implies Want,
and Want Humility, there being nothing
more absurd and preposterous in Na-
ture, than a Mixture of Pride and Po-
verty. And thus is this Prayer for the
Relief of our Wants, a good Remedy
against the Sin of Pride. But this is not

SERM.all. By looking up to God for the
 XXII. Blessings of his Providence upon us, we
 ~ are taught Fourthly, to be charitable to
 others. First, by the Example of our
 gracious Benefactor, who *giveth largely,
 and upbraideth not*. Secondly, by the
 End for which he gives us Wealth,
 not to hoard it up, or to lavish it away,
 but to provide for the Wants of others.
 We see that God, who is loving unto
 all, and whose Mercy is over all his
 Works, does yet suffer many to be de-
 stitute of those Blessings, of which we
 perhaps have too large a Share. And
 what can we gather from his thus deal-
 ing with us, but that he designs to
 make us his Stewards for the Poor, and
 Dispensers of his Bounty to them. When
 therefore we pray to him for our daily
 Bread, with a due Sense of our Depen-
 dence on him; when we consider how
 uncertain our Possessions are, that our
 Sustenance for a Day is as much as we
 can ask, and that it may be all wasted
 and gone to-morrow, it should put us
 in

in mind to provide for others in like SERM.
Manner as he does for us; we should XXII.
consider how little it is worth our 
while, to treasure up for our selves un-
certain Riches, when we may make
them turn to much more Account, by
dispersing them among those that want
them. We should consider also, what
a Privilege it is to be entrusted with the
Use of Riches, by the Help of which we
are enabled in some sort to supply the
Place of God's Providence to others. In
a word, we should reflect, that by re-
lieving their Wants, we are entitled to
ask at the Throne of Grace with more
Confidence for the Relief of our own;
and that by thus laying out our worldly
Treasure, *which Moth and Rust do corrupt,*
and to which Thieves break through and
steal, we shall secure to our selves a
Treasure in Heaven, where neither Moth
nor Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves
do not break through and steal. Here our
Possessions are uncertain and precarious,
of no long Continuance, and held only

SERM. from one Day to another; but there
 XXII. they will be certain, durable and last-
 ing, and will continue in our own
 Hands for ever. May we all therefore,
 by a wise and prudent Use of the Bless-
 ings his Providence bestows upon us,
 arrive at last at *that Land of Promise*, in
 which they will be no longer wanted.
 In the mean time, let the Advice of our
 Saviour be remembred; and *let us not*
labour for the Meat which perisheth, but
for the Meat which endureth to everlast-
ing Life, which the Son of Man shall
 give unto us.

To whom, with the Father, and the holy
Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all
Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Do-
minion, both now, and for evermore.





A

S E R M O N

On M A T T. vi. 12.

*And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive
our Debtors.*



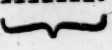
N these Words there are two SERM.
things observable. First, the XXIII.
Petition, *forgive us our Debts.*

And Secondly, the Condition
on which we ask Forgiveness, *as we for-
give our Debtors.* Both these are Sub-
jects very worthy to be considered; the
former, as it affords us the highest In-
stance of God's Goodness and Compas-
sion to the Sons of Men; the latter, as
it is a Motive to the Forgiveness of our
Enemies, one of the hardest of all Chri-
stian

SERM. stian Duties. I shall therefore at this Time
XXIII. consider them in their Order. And

First, I shall shew, how the Mercy and Goodness of God is remarkably display'd by the Permission here given us, to pray to him for the Forgiveness of our Sins.

The temporal Blessings which his Providence dispenses for the Supply of our worldly Wants, are Arguments indeed of great Goodness to us, and deserve our highest Gratitude and Love. But these are Matters of small Moment to us, in Comparison of those which look beyond the Grave, and yield a Prospect of better Things to come. For what would it avail us to be supplied by his Bounty, with the Necessaries of this present Life, if our Sins were to follow us to the next; and if the Debts we had contracted, were never cancell'd here, but placed to our Account, when we are summoned to appear *at the Judgment-seat of Christ*? if the Sins and Offences of our Youth and Old-age were registered and treasured up against us; if
no

no Act of Oblivion was to pass upon SERM.
our Actions, no Pardon granted, no XXIII.
Method of Atonement appointed to 
blot out our Sins, no Assurance that
our Prayers and Supplications will be
heard, no Direction to ask that our
Debts may be forgiven, as we forgive
our Debtors? We had all been conclu-
ded under Sin, says the Apostle, and
consequently under Punishment. Our
Sentence had been irreversibile, our Con-
demnation sure; and the Blessings and
Conveniencies we enjoy at present, had
served for nothing else, but to make our
Passage easy to a State of everlasting
Misery. Who could be so fond of a
short momentary Life, as to value it
on such Terms as these?

It is the glorious Prospect that we have
before us; the Certainty, that if we are not
wanting to our selves, *we may work out our
own Salvation*, obtaining by the Merits
and Satisfaction of our Lord, what we
were not able to secure for our selves; I
say, it is this Prospect, this Hope, this Con-
fidence,

SERM. fidence, in which our true Happiness
 XXIII. consists. The Means of Forgiveness are
 ~~~~~ placed in our own Hands, and therefore it is our own Fault if we miscarry: If we will but lament our past Offences, and forsake them for the Time to come, if we will but rely on God's Mercy through Christ, if we will but *forgive those that have offended us*, in Conformity to his Example and Command, no Iniquity shall be imputed to us. And therefore with these Thoughts and Designs about us, we may boldly have recourse to the Throne of Grace, and plead there for the Forgiveness of our Sins; *being justified freely by God's Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood.*

And now, when we consider the wretched State we were in, *before* Christ undertook our Ransom, the Necessity of Sinning, the Certainty of our Punishment, and how little Reason there was for God to *accept* of a Satisfaction,

to



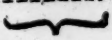
to reconcile such Rebels to him: We <sup>SERM.</sup> cannot but esteem it a high Instance of <sup>XXIII.</sup> God's Goodness, that he was pleased to provide a Remedy himself, and to point out a Method, by which Mercy might take place, and yet Justice be fully satisfied: Such a Method as nothing but his own Wisdom could contrive; such a Method, as the holy *Angels* were not able to discover, much less could Man have discovered it for himself, by all the Art that his own Misery could suggest.

The Use therefore that we ought to make of this amazing Goodness, is, first, to reflect with *Gratitude* upon it, and to acknowledge the *Sense* we have of our Unworthiness to receive it, and the utter Impossibility of our obtaining Mercy *without the free Grace of God.*

As there was nothing in our Power, that could influence God, or move him to shew Mercy to us; and as there was no Satisfaction, but the Blood of our Redeemer, that could consistently with God's Justice be accepted by him, our Condition

SERM. Condition was quite desperate and hopeless. No one could have expected, { that God himself should submit to pay the Ransom for us, or indeed that it was possible to unite the divine Nature in such a Manner to our sinful Flesh, that as Man had sinned, so Man should suffer, and yet that his Sufferings, by Virtue of that Union, should be a full and perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, which it was impossible for mere Man to make. But thus it was ordered. Thus God was satisfied, and thus Man was redeemed from Misery; thus was he rescued from everlasting Punishment, and entitled to everlasting Glory: And he that is not moved by such Benefits as these, he that can reflect upon them without *Love* and *Gratitude*, does very well deserve to lose them; nay, it is certain he *will* lose them: Notwithstanding Christ's Sufferings, *his* Portion will be no better than it was.

And this leads me to take notice of *another* Use, we ought to make of God's Goodness thus manifested

nifested unto us; and *that* is, that we SERM.  
labour to *secure* those Blessings, that are XXIII.  
thus purchased by the Blood of Christ. 

It is true, that no other Sacrifice is necessary to be offered, no other Satisfaction is required by God, but the Blood of our dear Redeemer. *He was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed.* But we are not so healed, as to be past Danger of relapsing; we are not so rescued from the Bondage of Corruption, that we are secure of God's Favour for the future. The Christian Life is a State of Trial and Conflict. He that bought us with a Price, has a Right to our Obedience; and at the same Time that he exempted us from the Punishment of our Sins, he laid upon us an Obligation to forsake them; to abstain from all wilful and premeditated Offences, and to repent of those Slips and Miscarriages which are unavoidable, through the Frailty  
and

SERM. and Infirmary of our Nature; above all,  
 XXIII. to pray to God for Mercy and For-  
 giveness, in like Manner as Christ has  
 taught us; and in order to obtain it,  
 to be ready to forgive others, accord-  
 ing to the full Purport of my Text,  
*Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our*  
*Debtors.* Where we see, that to forgive  
 those that trespass against *us*, is a neces-  
 sary Condition, without which we can-  
 not pray for the Forgiveness of our own  
 Trespases and Sins. Since therefore it  
 is a Matter of so much Consequence to  
 our Happiness, and a Duty, which, if  
 we may judge from the Practice of  
 Mankind, is one of the hardest that our  
 Religion has required, it may be worth  
 while to consider it distinctly.

And First, I shall enquire, what it is,  
 that is expected of us. To which Purpose  
 it may be proper to consider what we  
 mean, when we ask Forgiveness for our  
 own Trespases and Sins. For in what-  
 soever Sense we ask it of God, in the  
 same also we ought to exercise it to  
 others.

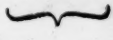


others. The Forgiveness of our Debt-SERM.  
ors, or, which is the same thing, our XXIII.  
Enemies, being here made not only the  
Condition, but the *Example* of the For-  
giveness which we ask of God. Now  
it is certain, that when we ask God the  
Forgiveness of our Debts, *i. e.* of our  
Trespases and Sins, our Meaning is,  
that he will not punish us for them;  
and not only so, but that he will take  
us into Favour, and afford us the same  
Succour and Protection from above,  
the same Assistance of his Grace, the  
same Title to everlasting Happiness, as  
if we had never sinned against him.  
Thus is the Forgiveness that we ask of  
God, described always in holy Scrip-  
ture to us. The Sacrifice of Christ's  
Death is a propitiatory Sacrifice, causing  
God to be propitious to us. *We have  
an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ  
the righteous, and he is the Propitiation  
for our Sins.* We are admitted thereby  
to many honourable Titles, and many  
Privileges belonging to them. From

SERM. all which it appears, in the Language of  
 XXIII. the Apostle, *that we are reconciled to*  
 ~~~~~ *God by Jesus Christ:* That we are not  
 only pardon'd our past Offences, but
 are also re-admitted to God's special Fa-
 vour, and may expect further Benefits
 at his Hands. And from hence we
 may see plainly, in what Sense it is that
 we ought to forgive our Enemies. Not
 only to abstain from all Acts of Vio-
 lence, all Instances of Revenge, all hurt-
 ful and injurious Treatment of their Per-
 sons, their Fortunes or Characters in the
 World, but also to do them good to
 the utmost of our Power, and to take
 all Opportunities to befriend them.

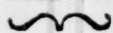
This is what we ask when we pray to
 God for our selves, and this therefore
 we ought to shew to others. And he
 that does less, whatever he may think,
 or however he may abound in any
 other Virtue, may be assured that he
 will never be forgiven. It is indeed a
 hard Saying, but it is no more than
 our Lord has told us. *For if ye for-
 give*

as we forgive our Debtors. 291

give Men their Trespases, says he, *your* SERM.
heavenly Father will also forgive you; XXIII.
but if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, 
neither will your heavenly Father forgive
your Trespases. One would think that
such a positive and express Assertion
from the Mouth of our blessed Saviour,
which, I believe, is as well known, and
as generally understood, as any other in
the whole Word of God, might dis-
courage us from all Methods of profe-
cuting our Revenge, without any other
Argument to enforce it. And indeed, if
the Fear of God's Vengeance on our
Sins, will not move us to be more cha-
ritable to others, it is not to be ex-
pected, that the Reason of the Thing
should have any Influence or Effect up-
on us.

But let it not however be omit-
ted, in the second Place, That the For-
giveness of our Enemies, as I have now
explained it, is, in several Views, a very
reasonable Duty: A Command, which,
one would think, should be more rea-
dily comply'd with, than in Fact it

SERM. appears to be, and that for these following Reasons.



First, Because it is the Badge of our Profession as Christians, the Precept which distinguishes our Religion from all others, that were ever taught or practised in the World. That which was said by the *Jews* of old Time, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy*, was said also by all Nations and Ages, and was never contradicted, till our Lord appeared, and commanded us to love our Enemies. *But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.* This was a new Strain of Benevolence to Mankind, that was never reached by any other Teacher. Morality was never raised to such a Height as this, by the greatest Masters of Reason that had appeared before, for the Benefit and Instruction of the World. It is a Doctrine, which bears the Marks of its divine

vine Original, and which could never SERM.
have been revealed and made known on XXIII.
Earth, but *by the Son of Man, who came* ~
down from Heaven. And yet, since it
has been revealed by him, it appears
every way worthy of its Author. There
is something in the Notion so magnifi-
cent and sublime, and in the Practice
so great and generous, that there is an
Heroism, a Christian Heroism in per-
forming it. There is a Greatness of Mind
in forgiving Enemies, far above the great-
est and most renown'd Atchievements of
those, who have filled the World with
the Fame of their Actions, their Victo-
ries, Exploits and Triumphs. And
therefore a great Mind should be mov-
ed to the Practice of it, if for no other
Reason, yet at least for this, that it is
an excellent and praise-worthy Virtue;
that as it is an Argument of a little
Mind, to trample and insult upon a con-
quer'd Enemy, so to meditate Revenge,
to shew an Enemy we can hurt him,
is an ungenerous and mean Ambition;

SERM. and that to conquer our selves, to sub-
 XXIII. due our Anger, to get the better of a
 { malicious and revengeful Temper, is not
 only the Duty of a Christian as such,
 but in truth the greatest Action, the
 most laudable Ambition, the most ex-
 cellent of all Virtues we can boast.

Secondly, to this Virtue we may be
 further encouraged by the Example of
 God himself, and of Christ, who, as
 a Man of like Passions with our selves, is
 a fitter Pattern for us Men to copy.
 Our Redemption was accomplished,
 God signed our Pardon, and Christ paid
 the Ransom for us, at a Time when
 we were Rebels and Enemies to God,
 and could therefore have no Hopes of
 Mercy. But Enemies, as we were,
 God loved us still; it was Love that
 moved him to have Compassion on us,
 and to accept of any Ransom for us.
 And it was Love that moved Christ to
 lay down that Ransom, when we had
 no Reason to expect any Favour from
 him, but rather *the due Reward of our*
Sins.

as we forgive our Debtors. 295

Sins. For so God loved the World, says SERM. the Apostle, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life. Herein is Love, says the same Apostle, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins. And concerning Christ's Love, it is observed by himself, that greater Love hath no Man than this; that a Man lay down his Life for his Friend. Thus was the Love of God to us Rebels and Apostates, made manifest by the Redemption of the World. Upon every Transgression, we become Enemies again: But as often as we transgress, if so often we repent, so often does his Mercy pardon. Such is the Example that we have to follow. And surely to imitate our great Creator, in that which is his darling Attribute, is an Ambition well worth our Study. *We cannot be pure, as he is pure, nor perfect, as he is perfect. But merciful we may be to all Persons that offend us, with-*

SERM. out any Restriction or Reserve. It is
 XXIII said indeed by malicious People, that
 they cannot forgive their Enemies, by
 which we are to understand they will
 not. For that, strictly speaking, we are
 not able to forgive, when we are in-
 deed willing and desirous to do it, is
 a Contradiction, because nothing but
 the Will is wanting: If I am willing
 to forgive, I have actually forgiven,
 and shall never, as long as that Will
 continues, have any Desire or Inclina-
 tion to Revenge. As, on the other hand,
 if I find that I meditate Revenge, I can-
 not say that I am willing to forgive.
 This therefore is a Pretence, that has no
 Foundation: And there is certainly no
 Injury so great and grievous, that we
 may not easily forgive, if we please. It
 is but to think of our own Trespases
 and Offences, and the Multitude of
 Provocations that we have given to God:
And then let us bear Malice, if we can.
 If we can, it is plain, we have no
 Christian Spirit. We either disbelieve
 what

what Christ has told us, or else we are SERM.
deceived by false Hopes of Pardon, XXIII.
when it shall please God to give us bet-
ter Dispositions, or else we are indiffe-
rent what becomes of us, if we can but
once execute our Revenge; a Temper
so malicious, implacable, and unmerci-
ful, that we cannot think of it without
some kind of Horror; a good Christi-
an, I am sure, would not harbour it in
his Breast for all that this World can
give. But

Thirdly, Another Motive to forgive
our Enemies, is the Peace and Quiet it
affords. This is indeed but a worldly
Motive, but withal it is a Motive
which the Scripture offers, and one
would think it should have great Influ-
ence on our Hearts. *If thine Enemy
hunger, feed him, says the Apostle: If
he thirst, give him Drink; for in so do-
ing thou shalt heap Coals of Fire on his
Head.* Rom. xii. 20. Coals of Fire,
not to waste and consume him, but to
melt him into Tenderness and Love.

For

298 *And forgive us our Debts,*

SERM. For who can withstand such gentle
 XXIII. Treatment, such a kind and com-
 passionate Concern for those, who
 have deserved it so very little at our
 Hands? *To return Good for Evil*, is not
 only a most Christian, but likewise a
 most happy Temper, as it is the best
 Means of preserving that Intercourse of
 good Offices, in which the Happiness
 of Society consists. While Men are
 Men, there will always be Complaints
 of Slights and Indignities, of Injuries
 and ill Offices, that are offered by one
 Man to another. And as long as they
 are resented, and made Matter of Con-
 tention, there will be no such thing as
 good Neighbourhood in the World.
 One Injury begets another, till a War
 commences, which is frequently fatal
 to one Party or the other, and always
 very troublesome to both. And yet
 when we come to trace the greatest
 Quarrels and Dissensions to the Foun-
 tains from which they sprung, how
 often do they end in a mistaken Word,

a mis-reported or misinterpreted Beha-^{SERM.}
viour, or in something which at first^{XXIII.}
might have easily been overlooked, and
its fatal Consequences at once prevented! But when once the Seeds of Discontent are sown, they are still growing, till they bring forth Revenge; when the Spark is kindled, new Fuel is administered by every Word and Action of the offending Party, till it breaks out into a Flame too violent to be resisted, and which nothing but Blood can quench. If it stops short of this, if it goes no further than to blast the Credit, or hurt the Fortune of our Enemy, what a Scene is here laid for mutual Invectives, for mutual Acts of Violence and Wrong! Who can be easy in such a State of Enmity? Who can have any Comfort, while he carries in his Mind such a Load of unquiet Passions? And is conscious at the same Time, that by his Enmity to his Fellow-Creature, he is at Enmity *with him*
that

SERM. *that made him?* That he is exposed to
 XXIII. God's Wrath, and incapable of Pardon,
in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bond
of Iniquity; and that as often as he prays
 by our Lord's Commands, he prays
 that God's Vengeance may be executed
 upon him, and that he may suffer the
 full Punishment of his Sin? Whereas by
 resolving to forgive his Enemies, by
 passing by the little Injuries and Sights
 of others, by shutting his Ears against
 Rumours and Reports, that are often
 spread abroad by malicious Tongues, to
 promote Jealousies and Discontents a-
 mong us, by stopping the first Ten-
 dencies and Inclinations to Revenge,
 by doing Good to all, not excepting
 those, whom he knows to have done
 Injuries to him; he does all that he
 can to promote Peace and Quiet, he
 is at least easy in himself, however
 he may be disturbed by the Insults
 and Affronts of others, he maintains
 a perpetual Serenity within, is at
 Peace

as we forgive our Debtors. 301

Peace with himself, with his Neigh-SERM.
bour, and with his God; or if the XXIII.
World *will* disquiet and molest him
here, is sure of Eternal Rest here-
after.





A

S E R M O N

On M A T T. vi. 13.

*And lead us not into Temptation, but
deliver us from Evil.*

SERM.
XXIV.



THE only Questions, that can arise upon the Meaning of these Words, are, First, what is meant by the Word *Temptation*. Secondly, In what Sense God may lead us into it. And Thirdly, What is meant by *Evil*. When these Questions are answered, we shall know the full Import of the Request we are here taught to offer up to God, and no Difficulty will remain concerning it.
And

And First, as to the Meaning of ^{SERM.} the Word *Temptation*, it is evident from ^{XXIV.} *holy Writ*, that Temptations in one Sense are far from being formidable to a Christian. *My Brethren*, says St. *James*, *count it all Joy, when ye fall into divers Temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your Faith worketh Patience.* James i. 2. *And blessed*, says he again, *is the Man that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* ver. 13. *Temptation*, in this Sense, is, you see, Matter of Joy: It is a Blessing, and a Token of God's Favour to us; it has a natural Tendency to produce Patience in our Hearts, and entitles us to a Crown of Life. When therefore our blessed Saviour instructed his Disciples, *to watch and pray, that they entred not into Temptation*, and when he gave us this Form, to be of constant Use among Christians in all Ages of the World;
by

304 *And lead us not into Temptation,*

SERM. by *Temptation* he could not mean the same
 XXIV. thing that is intended by St. *James* in
 { the above-cited Passages; but something
 which is an Evil, and which therefore
 it is our Duty to pray to God for his
 Grace to avert. Now it is certain, that
 Temptations considered by themselves,
 are absolutely neither good nor evil, but
 may become either, according as they
 are used, and according to the Strength
 of the Person who is tempted, and the
 Influence which they have upon him:
 Whatsoever may induce us to forsake
 our Duty, to swerve from our Obedi-
 ence, and to be guilty of any wilful
 Sin, whether it be the Love of Honour,
 Wealth, or Pleasure, the Fear of Want,
 or Shame, or Pain, or any other Evil
 that is irksome to our Nature, and
 which we would be glad at all Hazards
 to avoid; whatever, I say, may by any
 Means induce us to be wanting in our
 Duty to Almighty God, whether we
 actually comply with it or not, may
 be called a Temptation or Trial; be-
 cause

but deliver us from Evil. 305

cause Trial is so made of our Faith and SERM.
Virtue, and it is seen from our Conduct XXIV.
at such Times as these, whether we are
willing to forsake Christ for the Sake of
the World, or the World for the Sake
of Christ. *If the Deceitfulness of Riches,*
the Allurements of Pleasure, the Frowns
of the World, and the Terrours of Per-
secution cannot cause us to forfeit our
Trust in God, nor divert us from the
Pursuit of Heaven, Temptations are
then Blessings to us. On the other hand,
if we are captivated and subdu'd by
Pleasure; if, *as Riches increase, we set*
our Hearts upon them; if as soon as *Tri-*
bulation or Persecution arise, because of
the Word, we are offended; if Tempta-
tion of any Kind makes us yield to its
Assaults, and is too strong to be resisted
by us, it is then a great Evil to be so
exposed to Danger, such an Evil as
we may lawfully desire to escape, and
pray to God that by his Grace we may
avoid it. Since therefore we have rea-

306 *And lead us not into Temptation,*

SERM. son to distrust our own Strength, and
 XXIV. to acknowledge with the Apostle, *that*
 ~~~~~ *our Sufficiency is of God*, since we know  
 not how soon we may be mastered and  
 subdued, by the Multitude of Temp-  
 tations that perpetually beset us, we  
 are here taught to pray, that, so far as  
 is consistent with our present State of  
 Trial and Probation, we may be rescued  
 and delivered from them: That foras-  
 much as he knows what Strength we  
 have, what Resistance we can make,  
 and how far we may be safely trusted,  
 he would so far adapt the Temptation  
 to our Strength, or so strengthen us  
 with his blessed Spirit, that we may be  
 able *to endure unto the End*, or in the  
 Words of the Apostle, *that he may not*  
*suffer us to be tempted above that we*  
*are able, but may with the Temptation also*  
*make a Way to escape, that we may be*  
*able to bear it.* By Temptation there-  
 fore, in the Words before us, we are  
 to understand those Temptations only,  
 which

*but deliver us from Evil.* 307

which are too great to be resisted by us; SERM.  
those which God knows to be beyond XXIV.  
our Strength, and, if he were to suffer  
them to be exercised upon us, would  
most certainly produce our Ruin.

But if this be the Meaning of Temptation in my Text, it may be asked, Secondly, in what Sense God may lead us into it; for if God never leads us into such Temptations, what need have we to pray against them? And yet to say that he does, is to make him the Author of all the Sins we commit against him, contrary to the express Command of the Apostle, *Let no Man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man.* But forasmuch as whatsoever is done in the World, is done at least by the Permission of God; and the Tempter himself, the great Enemy of Mankind, cannot exercise his Art upon us, without *his* Consent, who restrains his Power, and sets

X 2                      Bounds

308 *And lead us not into Temptation,*

SERM. Bounds to his malicious Projects ; for  
 XXIV. these Reasons the Temptations, which  
 are executed and contrived by the Malice and Art of Satan, not with a Design to make Trial of our Virtue, and to give us an Occasion to exercise our Patience, that it may shine with a more distinguished Lustre, but with a wicked Desire to withdraw us from our Duty, and to tempt us to Sin and Misery ; even these, I say, may be said, in some Sense, to be brought upon us by the Counsel of God. Hence it is that we find God, by the Mouth of his holy Prophets, very frequently asserting his own Power and Supremacy, by all the Evil that is brought about in the Earth. *I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the Light, and create Darkness ; I make Peace, and create Evil ; I the Lord do all these things.*

Now it is certain, that so bountiful and kind a Being cannot possibly, by his own Choice, or without absolute Necessity,



*but deliver us from Evil.* 309

Necessity, be the Author of any Evil SERM.  
in the World. When therefore it is XXIV.  
said, that he creates Evil, the Mean-  
ing can only be, that he suffers it:  
That he, who could, if he pleased,  
prevent the doing it, does nevertheless  
for good Reasons permit it to be  
done, giving Power to those who are  
wickedly inclined, to bring about their  
malicious Purposes; not opposing their  
Attempts, nor over-ruling their De-  
signs, but allowing them to proceed,  
without Lett or Hindrance, till they  
have executed their destructive Projects.  
Thus *Joseph* tells his Brethren, who  
had sold him into *Egypt*, that *God had*  
*sent him before them, to preserve their*  
*Lives*; though in truth the Act which  
brought him thither, could not fail to  
be displeasing to Almighty God,  
as it was an envious and inhu-  
man Act. And thus also the very  
Malice and Barbarity of the *Jews*,  
which brought our blessed Saviour to

310 *And lead us not into Temptation,*

SERM. the Cross, is said to be no more *than*  
 XXIV. *God's Hand and God's Counsel had de-*  
*termined before to be done.* Not that  
 God liked or approved the Action,  
 much less did he inspire such a Spirit  
 of Revenge into the Actors of  
 that bloody Tragedy; but because  
 it was done by his Permission and Con-  
 sent, and because the great Work of  
 our Redemption was accomplished by  
 the Malice of these cruel Men: The  
 Work therefore, which they did, as it  
 conduced to that End, is said to have  
 been pre-ordained by him. And in  
 this Sense it is, that we petition in my  
 Text, not to be led into Temptation  
 by God: Not as supposing that God  
 actually tempts us, but only as he  
 suffers us to be tempted by the Devil,  
 and to be misled by our own Lusts  
 and Passions. *For every one is tempted,*  
*says the Apostle St. James, when he is*  
*led away of his own Lust, and inticed.*  
 When therefore we offer up the Pe-  
 tition

*and deliver us from Evil.* 311

tion in my Text, we ought to make SERM.  
it our Request to God, that he would XXIV.  
grant us such a Measure of his pre-  
venting Grace, as may enable us to  
subdue those stubborn Enemies, which  
we constantly carry about in our  
Hearts; *that we may mortify our Mem-  
bers, that are upon the Earth.* And  
above all, that we may cope with  
our great Adversary the Devil, who  
plays our own Passions and Lusts a-  
gainst us, and makes them turn to  
our utter Ruin. It is with Respect  
to his Subtlety and Malice, accord-  
ing to some, that it is added in my  
Text, *but deliver us from Evil, i. e.*  
as they say, from the *evil one*, from  
him, who is the great Author of  
Wickedness among Men, whose Pro-  
perty it is to delight in Mischief, and  
who is in his own Nature as essenti-  
ally evil, as God is just and good.

Thus am I come to the third  
Question I proposed, What is the  
X 4 Meaning

312 *And lead us not into Temptation,*

SERM. Meaning of the Word *Evil* in my  
XXIV. Text. Some, as I said, understand it  
of the Devil; and in this Sense there  
is a very proper and just Antithesis be-  
tween the first and second Clauses in  
my Text. For then it will run thus,  
when it comes to be explained, *Do  
not suffer us, O Lord, to be tempted  
above our Strength, but deliver us from  
him that tempts us.* It is certain,  
that the Word which is here render-  
ed *Evil*, is in other Parts of Scrip-  
ture applied to the Devil, and is so  
rendered in our *English* Version. Thus  
in *Matt. 13.* where our Saviour is  
explaining the Parable which he had  
given them of the Sower, speaking  
of those who through the Malice and  
Art of Satan lose the Benefit of God's  
Word upon their Hearts, he calls the  
Devil *the wicked one*, which is ex-  
pressed in the Original, by the same  
Word which is rendered *Evil* in my  
Text. The same Title is given him  
also



also by St. *John*. I write unto you, SERM.  
young Men, says he, *because ye have* XXIV.  
*overcome the wicked one*: Where again  
the Word which is rendered *wicked*  
*one*, is the same that is rendered *Evil*  
in my Text. And as this Inter-  
pretation is very proper to the Word,  
and agreeable to the Place it is found  
in, so is it also supported by very  
great Authority, being so explained  
by the great St. *Chrysostom*, and after  
him, by many other Writers. It is  
further countenanced by the short  
Explanation of this Prayer, which the  
Church Catechism has given us:  
Where among many other Things,  
from which we pray to be delivered,  
we pray also *against our ghostly Enemy*.  
From whence we are to learn, that  
if this be not the only, it is at least  
one Meaning of the Words before  
us, too considerable to be omitted  
in our Prayers.

But Secondly, By *Evil*, may be  
understood what is meant by *Evil* in  
the

314 *And lead us not into Temptation,*

SERM. the common Sense of the Word; of  
 XXIV. which there are two Sorts, as it is  
 commonly distinguished into *natural*  
 and *moral* Evil. By natural Evil,  
 we are to understand those Afflictions  
 which befall us by the Condition of  
 our Nature: Those Difficulties we  
 encounter, those Hardships we endure,  
 those painful Sensations to which our  
 Bodies are exposed, and those anxious  
 Thoughts to which our Minds are  
 subject, by the many Accidents and  
 Calamities of Life: Such as Want, and  
 Shame, and Pain, and Sorrow, the fa-  
 tal Consequences of our first Parent's  
 Fall, and the Punishment of his Child-  
 ren's Sins. These, as they are evil, and  
 undesirable in themselves, we pray may  
 be averted from us, not absolutely and  
 unconditionally, but so far as God's  
 Wisdom foresees they will prove hurt-  
 ful to us. For doubtless, many times,  
 it may be better for us to be so vi-  
 sited by the Hand of God: His Pro-  
 vidence

*but deliver us from Evil.*

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vidence may so order the Events of SERM.  
Things, that what we call Evil in this XXIV.  
Sense of the Word, may be indeed a  
very signal Blessing. Our Wants and  
Necessities, our Pains and Diseases, and  
the Multitude of Afflictions and Calamities which befall us, may be sent to exercise our Patience, to confirm our Faith, to mortify our Lusts, to convince us of our Frailty, our Impotence, and Dependence; and by shewing us, that in this World there is no lasting Happiness, to raise up our Thoughts, and to fix our Hopes on that Happiness which is to last for ever. These and other Benefits we may derive, by God's Blessing, from the Evils which befall us here; and therefore we are not absolutely to pray, that we may be free from Calamities and Afflictions, but so far only as they are real Evils; not desiring to be exempt from God's Chastisements and Corrections, when he knows we shall be the better for them, but that, so far as is consistent with

316 *And lead us not into Temptation,*

SERM. with this salutary Discipline, our Lives  
 XXIV. may be quiet and easy, and that we  
 { may have as much Pleasure and Com-  
 placence in them, as the Condition of  
 our Nature, the Disposition of the  
 World, and the Good of our Souls  
 permit. And in this Sense it is, that  
 we pray to God to be delivered from  
 all *natural* Evil. As to *moral* Evil,  
 which is the Evil of Sin, with respect to  
*this*, as we cannot be too careful to a-  
 void it, so neither can we be too earn-  
 est and importunate with God, that  
 it will please him to deliver us from  
 it. Here we may give a Loofe to our  
 most ardent Wishes, because we are sure  
 they are agreeable to his Will, and that  
 our Prayers of *this* Kind are as accep-  
 table to *him*, as to *us* they will prove  
 useful and beneficial. Lastly, by thus  
 praying to be delivered from Sin, we  
 do in effect pray to be delivered from  
 Punishment, and consequently from  
 everlasting Death; which is the last  
 thing implied by the Word *Evil* in my  
 Text,



*but deliver us from Evil.* 317

Text, and with respect to which all SERM.  
other Evils are Matters of small Consequence or Regard. XXIV. Thus have I explained the full Meaning of my Text, which to the end that it may the better be remembred and understood, I shall leave with you in the following Paraphrase.

Do thou, O God, who seest that we are beset with many dangerous and great Temptations, whose Will it is that in this State of Trial we should constantly be exposed to Danger; thou who knowest the secret Thoughts and Dispositions of our Hearts, and what Trials we have Strength to bear; so mortify and subdue our corrupt Affections, so curb and controll our great Enemy the Devil, that we may never be tempted beyond our Strength, but as often as we are assaulted by his Malice from without, or betray'd by our Lusts within, may we be supported with Strength and Wisdom from above, and enabled to escape from Danger. Preserve us by  
these

SERM. these Means, if it be thy Will, O Lord;  
 XXIV. from all Evil that can happen to us; from  
 the natural Evils which continually surround us, by thy Appointment, in this Vale of Misery, so far as thou seest they will be Evils to us, and of no Use to our spiritual Advantage; and above all from the moral Evil of Sin, and from the Evil of Punishment which attends it: That upon the whole, being secure from all Sin and Wickedness, and from our Ghostly Enemy, and from everlasting Death, we may obtain thy Promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through the Merits of our dear Redeemer, to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, &c.

F I N I S.



